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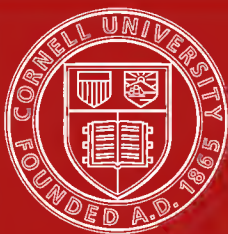
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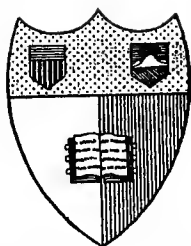
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BIBLE STORIES



STORIES FROM THE BIBLE

BY THE
REV. ALFRED J. CHURCH

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AFTER JULIUS SCHNORR

London
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PREFACE

I HAVE endeavoured to re-tell some of the chief stories of the Old Testament in the hope that what I have written may, with God's blessing, help those who teach and those who learn. To account for and defend the omissions that I have made and the explanations that I have added is impossible within the limits of a preface. They must be left to the kind judgment of my readers, who will not fail to understand that a task which may at first sight seem easy is really very difficult. The language of Scripture has been commonly followed, sometimes imitated to the best of my power. Explanations which could not be so expressed have been put into the shape of notes.

I hope to follow this volume with a second in which others of the Old Testament Stories will be given.

I am under obligations which it is impossible to acknowledge in detail to the *Speakers' Com-*

mentary, to the *Old Testament Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Bishop Ellicott, to Dean Stanley's *Jewish Church*, and to the admirable series of "Men of the Bible," published by Messrs. Nisbet and Co.

A. J. C.

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THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

I.—Abram

IN UR¹ of the Chaldees, which was near to the great river Euphrates, dwelt a certain Terah, who was ninth in descent from Shem, the son of Noah. This Terah had three sons, namely, Haran, Nahor, and Abram. Now Haran and Nahor worshipped idols, of which the moon-god was the chief. So did also all the people of the land; but Abram knew the true God, and worshipped Him only.²

¹ Ur, or "the city" of the Chaldees, now Mugheir, was at the time of Abram (about 2000 B.C.) near, if not on, the sea, which has greatly receded since that time, owing to the deposits of soil brought down by the Euphrates and the Tigris. It is now as much as eighty miles from the coast.

² Jewish and Mahometan legends have much to say about Abram's early faith, and the courage which he showed in maintaining it under persecution. In these legends Nimrod, who must be supposed to have been really of much earlier date (the writer of Genesis apparently puts him very near to the Deluge, as being the grandson of Ham), commonly appears as the wicked and idolatrous prince, who seeks in vain to destroy or silence the young preacher of a pure faith. One of these legends runs as follows: "Abram's birth was foretold by a star, and Nimrod, fearing lest he should become a dangerous rival, sought to kill him. Terah substituted the child of a slave, and hid his own son in a cave. Emerging thence, after years of seclusion, he saw the heavens, and asked himself who made them. The sun rose, and he said, 'It is the sun,' and he prayed to it. It set, and he said, 'That which made all things cannot yield to aught.' The moon appeared and the stars, and again he thought that he had found the Creator and Ruler; but these too gave place to the sun. Then said Abram, 'These could not have created the world; there must be One who created them.' His mother came to meet him, and was

Haran, son of Terah, had a son, Lot by name, and two daughters, Milcah and Iscah or Sarai ; and Milcah became the wife of Nahor, and Sarai the wife of Abram. After a while God appeared to Abram, and said unto him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and go into the land that I shall show thee." So he persuaded Terah his father. And Terah departed from Ur of the Chaldees, taking with him Abram, and Sarai his wife, and Lot his grandson (but Haran, that was father to Lot, had died in the land of the Chaldees), and all that he had. Westward he travelled till he came to Haran.¹ This Haran was near to Euphrates, and because the land was rich and fertile, and good for the feeding of flocks and herds, and because he himself also was now old and feeble, Terah would go no farther. So he abode in Haran, and Abram and Lot with him, till the day of his death. Two hundred and five years old was he when he died.² But before he died there came to Haran out of Ur of the Chaldees Abram's brother Nahor, with Milcah his wife, and their children. So they all dwelt together, and gathered

astonished at his growth. 'Can you,' she asked, 'be my son who was so little, and are so tall?'—'Learn from this, mother,' he replied, 'that there is an Almighty God who has made all things.'—'What !' cried she, 'is there any god besides Nimrod?'—'Yes,' he answered ; 'One who is God of heaven and earth, and of Nimrod also.' The report of these words reached Nimrod, and the king sent messengers to arrest the speaker. An angel hid him in a mist. Other marvels followed, and at last the king confessed, 'Thy God is great and mighty, and indeed King of kings.'"

¹ Haran seems to represent the older word *Kharran* (seen in the Greek *Charran*), which is supposed to have the meaning of "road," and to have got its name from the fact that it is on the highroad between the east and west.

² It is not well to build too much on dates and numbers, things which are almost universally found full of errors in all ancient literature. We may conjecture, however, that Abram was now between seventy and eighty years of age. He was, we know, but a few years older than his wife Sarai, who yet, being the grand-daughter of his father, belonged to a younger generation.

much wealth in cattle and flocks and men-servants and maid-servants. But Nahor and his family still worshipped idols.

When Terah was dead, God spake again to Abram, saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that



THE SIGHT OF THE PROMISED LAND.

I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So Abram rose, and took with him Lot, his brother's son, and their two households, and all the slaves that they two had bought in the land of Haran, and all their sheep and oxen—many thousands in all¹—and went

¹ We shall see that but a few years after this migration Abram was a powerful prince, who could put more than three hundred armed men into the field.

into the land of Canaan.¹ And having come thither he pitched his tent for the first time in Sichem, in the oak-grove which was called the oak-grove of Moreh. While he sojourned at Moreh the Lord appeared unto him, and said, "This is the land which I promised to give to thee, and to thy children after thee." Then Abram built an altar and offered sacrifices unto the Lord. From Moreh he went to Luz²—there also he built an altar—and from Luz he journeyed into the south country. But while he dwelt there, there was a grievous famine in the land, and he was constrained to go down into Egypt.

Now as Abram came near to the borders of Egypt, he began to fear for his life. Sarai his wife was a very fair woman, and he thought to himself, "The Egyptians will kill me that they may take my wife." So he said to Sarai, "Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister ; so wilt thou save my life." And Sarai consented ; for they had agreed between them at the first when they set out on their wanderings that at every place whither they should come she should say of him, "He is my brother." When they came to the borders of Egypt the officers that had the charge of these matters sent to tell the king that a stranger had come from the north country, and that he had brought with him an exceedingly fair woman, who was, he said, his sister. So Sarai was taken into the house of

¹ Nothing is said in the Bible of the route which Abram followed. The tradition accepted by Josephus is that he went by way of Damascus. In this case he crossed the Euphrates by the ford of Thapsacus (*Thipsach*, or "the Passage"), and followed the caravan route, already, it is probable, well marked and frequented, which skirted the desert by its northern border, till it brought him to Damascus. From Damascus he would take the ordinary route to Egypt, and cross the Jordan into Palestine proper by a ford a few miles south of the lake of Chinnereth or Gennesaret.

² Luz was afterwards called Beth-el (house of God). The narrative of how it came to receive that name is told in Gen. xxviii. 19.

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, that she might be added to the number of his wives. And Pharaoh gave many gifts to Abram—men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses and oxen and sheep—for Sarai his sister's sake. But the Lord sent sickness into Pharaoh's house, and his wise men told him that it had been sent on account of the stranger woman whom he had taken into his house. Therefore he sent for Abram, and said to him, "What is this thou hast done? why didst thou not tell me that this woman was thy wife? why didst thou say that she was thy sister? I might have taken her to be my wife; take now therefore thy wife, and go thy way."

So Pharaoh sent Abram away. But he took not away from him the gifts that he had given him, nor aught that he had. Also he gave his officers a charge concerning him that he should suffer no harm, but should depart from the land in safety and peace.

So Abram went back to the land of Canaan—for the famine had ceased—and pitched his tent again at Luz. Now the land had already many inhabitants, for the Canaanites dwelt in the cities, and the Perizzites in the fields and on the hills. And because Abram and Lot had many flocks and herds there was not room enough for the two. When therefore there arose strife between the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot, because the pasture was not sufficient for both, Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, for we are brethren. The whole land is before thee. Choose what thou wilt for thyself. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right. If thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Then Lot looked out from Bethel and saw the country. When he looked to the north and to the south and to the west, all seemed barren.

But eastward he looked on the plain of Jordan, and saw that it was green and well watered, even as a garden of the Lord. So Lot chose for himself the plain of Jordan. And he separated himself from Abram, and journeyed to Sodom. First he pitched his tent outside the city, but afterwards he took up his abode within the walls. But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

After Lot had departed, the Lord appeared again to Abram, and said, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward and southward and westward and eastward. For all the land which thou seest I will give to thee, and to thy children for ever. And I will make thy posterity as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy posterity also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee."

After this Abram removed his tent, and travelled to the place that was called Kirjath-Arba,¹ and afterwards Hebron. There he pitched his tent under the oak-tree of Mamre. This Mamre was a great chief among the Amorites.

While he dwelt under the oak-tree of Mamre there came war in the east country; and the cause of the war was this. While Abram still dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and other kings of the east with him, had conquered the five cities of the plain of Jordan,² and had laid a tribute upon them. But now the five cities rebelled, and refused to pay their tribute. Twelve years they had served, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled, and in

¹ Kirjath-Arba means the "city of writings." The name seems to indicate a certain amount of culture among the tribes inhabiting Canaan.

² The five cities were Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Bela.

the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer came up against them, having with him Amraphel and Arioch, kings of Babylonia, and Tidal, king of the land of Assyria. First these four kings smote the tribes that dwelt in Haran, and in the land that lies between Arnon and the brook Jabbok, and in the land of Moab. Also they smote the tribes that dwelt in the caves of Mount Hor, and the Amalekites and the Amorites that dwelt eastward of Jordan, and so came at last to the Cities of the Plain. Then the kings of the five cities gathered together their army and went out to meet the armies of the east. In the valley of Siddim¹ they met them. The valley was full of pits of bitumen, and the five kings hoped that the chariots and horsemen of the eastern army would be ensnared amongst them. But the battle went against the five kings, and many of their people were slain, they that were left escaping to the mountains of Moab. Then Chedorlaomer and his allies spoiled the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, taking away all their possessions, and all their food, and so departed. And they took Lot, that was Abram's nephew, and all his goods with them.

But one that had escaped from the battle fled to Abram, where he dwelt under the oak-tree of Mamre, and told him how that Lot had been carried away captive by the kings of the east. And when Abram heard that Lot his nephew² had been carried away, he armed his servants—men born in his house and trained for war. They were three hundred and eighteen in number. Also he had with them certain of the

¹ Siddim would mean the "salt valley."

² In the narrative of Genesis Lot is spoken of as Abram's brother. The relationship between Abram and Lot was precisely the same as that between Abram and Sarai (if, as has been supposed, Sarai was Iscah, the daughter of Haran). The statement to Pharaoh, therefore, was not absolutely false.

people of Mamre and Aner and Eshcol, princes of the Amorites, for these were confederate with him; with these he pursued after the invaders, and overtook them at Laish (which place was afterwards called Dan, and was near to the springs of Jordan). Here they were encamped, thinking that none would attack them. Then Abram divided the men that were with him into two parts, and attacked the four kings by night from either side of their encampment. So he put them to flight, and pursued them to Hobah, which lies between Damascus and Tadmor of the wilderness. He brought back with him all the goods that they had taken from the five cities, and Lot and his family, and all the prisoners. And as he returned the king of Sodom came out to meet him, and said to him, "Give me back now the prisoners that thou hast taken out of the hand of Chedorlaomer, for they are my own people; but take all the goods to thyself." But Abram answered him, "I have taken an oath, lifting up my hand, to the Lord, the most high God, whose are the heaven and the earth, that I will not take a thread or a shoe-latchet from thee. Nothing will I take of thine, lest thou say, I have made Abram rich. Nevertheless, that which the young men my servants have eaten on the way that thou shalt give them. These men, too, that have helped me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

There also came to meet him Melchizedek,¹ king of

¹ We need have little hesitation in concluding that Salem is the same as Jerusalem, and that the name Melchizedek means, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, king of righteousness. But who Melchizedek himself was, and how he came to receive homage from the Father of the Faithful, is exceedingly doubtful. One conjecture makes him out to be Shem, who must, indeed, if the chronology of Gen. xi. be correct, have survived to this time. Another, built on the words in Heb. xii. 3, "Without father, without mother, without descent," makes him out to have been some supernatural person. But these words seem to mean

Salem, a priest of the most high God, and offered him first-fruits, even bread and wine, and blessed him, saying, "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, whose are heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth part of all the spoil that he had taken. And after these things he returned and dwelt at Mamre.

Then God appeared to him in a vision and said, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

Abram answered, "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing that I am childless, and that one born in my house, even Eliezer of Damascus, is my heir?"

Then said the Lord, "He shall not be thine heir; thine own son shall be thine heir." And He bade him go forth from his tent and look up into the heavens, and said, "Tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. So shall be thy posterity."

And Abram believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

Then the Lord said, "I have brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees that thou mayest inherit this land."

Abram said, "How shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

The Lord said, "Take a heifer, and a she-goat, and a ram, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon."

So Abram took them and divided the beasts into two portions, and laid the two portions over against each

that he had no title in right of birth to the priestly office, and in this respect differed from the Aaronic priests, though it must be confessed that the following phrases, "Without beginning of days nor end of life," are obscure. We may suppose him to have been a Canaanitish chief, who had preserved in a remarkable way the tradition of a pure faith and a pure life, elsewhere so obscured. While there were such as Melchizedek in the land the "iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full."

other ; but the birds he divided not. And when the sun went down he fell into a deep sleep, and heard a voice that said, "Thy posterity shall dwell in a land that is not theirs, and shall be afflicted four hundred years ; but the nation that shall afflict them I will judge. After that they shall go out from among their



"AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN FOR MULTITUDE."

oppressors with great riches, and shall come again to this land ; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

And when the sun went down and it was dark, Abram saw a smoking furnace and a burning lamp pass between the portions of the sacrifice, being the tokens of the presence of the Lord. Then, as Abram had passed between the portions, so the Lord passed between them, and a covenant was made between the Lord and Abram ; for the custom was that when

two thus passed between the portions of a sacrifice a covenant was made between them. And the Lord said, "Unto thy race have I given all this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

After these things Abram took to wife Sarai's maid Hagar, the Egyptian, for Sarai would have it so, because she had no children. When Hagar knew that she should bear a child she despised her mistress, and Sarai was wroth with Abram, and said, "See now, I have given my maid to be thy wife, and she despiseth me." But Abram answered, "She is thine; do as thou wilt." And Sarai dealt so hardly with her that she fled from the tent. But as she lay by a well in the wilderness the angel of God spake to her, saying, "Hagar, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?" She answered, "I flee from the face of Sarai my mistress." The angel said, "Go back, and submit thyself to thy mistress. Thou shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael¹; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. He shall be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."

Then Hagar said, "Surely, O God, Thou seest all things; and I too have seen Thee, and yet live." And thereafter the well by which Hagar sat when the angel spake to her was called the well of "Seeing and Living."² So Hagar returned to her mistress; and she bare a son to Abram, who called his name Ishmael. Abram was fourscore and six years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to him.

¹ Ishmael = God heareth.

² Beer-lahai-roi.

II.—Abraham

When Abram was now ninety and nine years old, and Ishmael his son thirteen, the Lord appeared again unto him, and said, "I am the Almighty¹ God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect."

Then Abram fell on his face before God; and the Lord spake to him again, saying, "My covenant is with thee, and I will make thee the father of many nations. Hereafter thy name shall not be any more *Abram*, but thy name shall be *Abraham*; because I have made thee a father of many nations.² And I will give thee, and thy children after thee, this land of Canaan to be a perpetual possession." At this time God gave to Abraham the law of circumcision, to be the token of the covenant that He had made with him.

Also He said to him, "As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah.³ I will bless her, and give her a son of thee. She shall be a mother of nations, and kings shall come from her."

Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, saying to himself, "Shall I, who am a hundred years old, have a son? and Sarah, that is ninety years old, be a mother?" Nevertheless he believed in his heart that this thing should be, "*giving glory to God; and being fully assured that what He had promised He was able also to perform.*"⁴

¹ El Shaddai.

² "Abram," or Abu-ram, means "exalted father," which may be taken as equivalent to "father of a clan or tribe." "Abraham," on the other hand, has the meaning of "father of a multitude." The change is effected by the significant addition of the letter *h*, a letter which appears in the name commonly given as Jchovah, but more correctly represented by Yahveh.

³ Sarai = "contention"; Sarah = "princess." The change of meaning is effected again by the introduction of the letter *h*.

⁴ Rom. iv. 21.

Neither did he forget his son Ishmael, but said, "O that Ishmael might live before Thee!"

God said to Abraham, "Sarah thy wife shall indeed bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him, and with his children after him for ever. And as for Ishmael, I have blessed him, and will multiply him exceedingly, and will make of him a great nation."

Not many days after, as Abraham sat in his tent-door, where he dwelt under the oak of Mamre, he espied three travellers. And when he saw them he ran from the tent-door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground before them, and said to him that seemed chief among them, "My lord, if I have found favour in thy sight, pass not on at once, but turn aside to visit me. Let a little water be fetched that ye may wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, and I will fetch a morsel of bread that ye may refresh yourselves. After that ye shall pass on."

And the man said, "So do as thou hast said."

Then Abraham hastened unto Sarah where she sat in the tent, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, and knead it, and bake cakes upon the hearth." This done, he ran to the stalls of the cattle and took thence a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who hastened to cook it. And he took butter and milk and the calf that had been cooked, and set them before the travellers, and stood by them under the tree as they ate.

And they said to him, "Where is Sarah thy wife?"

He answered, "She is in the tent."

Then he that was chief among them said, "Sarah thy wife shall bear a son when this season of the year shall come again."

Sarah heard these words where she sat in the tent,

and laughed to herself, for the thing seemed to her beyond belief.

Then the Lord said, "Did Sarah laugh, thinking, Shall I that am so old indeed bear a son? Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Then Sarah denied, and said, "I laughed not," for she was afraid. But He said, "Nay, but thou didst laugh."

After this the men rose up, and departed, having their faces turned towards Sodom. And Abraham went with them to bring them on their way. And the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; for he shall become a great nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, to do judgment and justice."

Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Because the report of Sodom and Gomorrah is very evil, and their sin very grievous, I have come to see whether they have altogether sinned according to the report."

Then two of the three went on towards Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. He bethought him of Lot, his brother's son, and of his household, and said to the Lord, "Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there may be fifty righteous within the city: wilt Thou not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous? That be far from Thee to slay the righteous with the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

The Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous, I will spare all the place for their sake."

Abraham spake again, "I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I be but dust and ashes. Peradventure there may lack five of the fifty: wilt Thou destroy all the city for the lack of five?"

The Lord said, "If I find forty and five, I will not destroy it."

Abraham said again, "Peradventure forty will be found there."

And the Lord answered, "I will not do it if there be forty there."

Then Abraham said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Peradventure there shall be thirty found there."

The Lord said, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there."

Abraham spake again, "Peradventure there shall be twenty found there."

The Lord answered, "I will spare it for twenty's sake."

Yet once again did Abraham speak. "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once only. Peradventure ten shall be found there."

And the Lord said, "I will spare it for ten's sake."

After this Abraham returned to his place. But the next day he rose up early in the morning, and looked eastward towards the Cities of the Plain; and, behold, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace, for the Lord had not found the ten righteous, and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of those cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

After these things Abraham went down to sojourn in the south country and dwelt among the Philistines. And here again, for fear of the king Abimelech, he said of Sarah his wife that she was his sister, as he had done to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. For he said to himself, "There is no fear of God in this place, and they will slay me for Sarah's sake, if they know that she is my wife." And Abimelech would have taken her to be his wife,

desiring to make alliance with Abraham. But when he found that she was indeed Abraham's wife, he said to him, "Why didst thou think so ill of me and my house as to deceive me in this matter?" And to Sarah he said, "Why didst thou not tell me the truth? Behold, I have given thy brother, as thou calledst him, many gifts, because of the wrong that I might have done him, but it is thou that wast to blame." So Sarah was reproved.

After this Sarah bare a son, as the Lord had promised to her and Abraham. And Abraham called his name Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, even as the Lord had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born.

On the day when Isaac was weaned, Abraham made a great feast. Now Ishmael had thought that he should be his father's heir, and when he saw that he was supplanted, he was very wroth, and spake bitter words, and would have done harm to the child. His mother also encouraged him in his misdoing. Then Sarah said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of a bondwoman shall not be heir along with my son, even with Isaac." But the thing was very grievous to Abraham, for he loved his son Ishmael. Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Let not this thing that Sarah asketh of thee be grievous unto thee. Harken to her words, for indeed the blessing that I have promised to thee, and to thy children after thee, is not in Ishmael but in Isaac. Nevertheless, I will make of Ishmael a great nation."

Then Abraham believed that no harm should happen to the lad. Therefore he rose up early the next morning, and gave Hagar provision of bread and a bottle of water, putting it on her shoulder, and sent her and her son away. And Ishmael was now sixteen years of

age or thereabouts. So Hagar departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. But all the water in the bottle was spent, and the lad lay under a shrub, like to perish of thirst. Then Hagar went and sat herself down a long way off from the lad, even as far as a man may shoot an arrow. For she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the child." And she lifted up her voice and wept. Then the Angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said, "Hagar, what aileth thee? Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand. I will make him a great nation." Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

And God was with the lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer, and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

While Abraham dwelt at Beersheba, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, with Phichol, who was captain of his host, came to him, and said, "We see that God is with thee in all that thou doest. Now therefore swear unto me that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, or with my son, or with my son's son, but wilt deal truly with me, as I have dealt truly with thee?" And Abraham said, "I will swear." But he said also, "Thy servants have taken a well by force from my servants." Abimelech answered, "I know not who hath done this thing. Thou hast not told me aught of it till this day, nor indeed have I heard of it at all." Then Abraham set seven ewe lambs by themselves; and when Abimelech asked him why he had so done, he said, "Thou shalt take these seven ewe lambs from me, and thy taking them shalt be a pledge that indeed my servants have digged this well." So these two, Abraham and Abimelech, made a covenant between them. For

many days did Abraham dwell in Beersheba, and he planted a grove there and worshipped the Lord.

After these things God tried Abraham's faith, saying to him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah,¹ and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains that I shall show thee."

So Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave wood for a burnt-offering, and journeyed towards the place of which God had told him. On the third day of his journeying he saw the place afar off. Then he said to the young men, "Abide here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and will come again to you." For, indeed, he did not doubt but that the lad should come back again, even though he should slay him for a burnt-offering, for he believed that the Lord would even raise him up from the dead.² And he took the wood for the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; he took fire also, and a knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to Abraham, "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?" And Abraham

¹ The place where the event about to be related took place has been the subject of much controversy. The mention of Mount Moriah would point to Jerusalem, and to the hill on which the temple was afterwards built. The significance of this is evident. Jerusalem, it may be said, suits so far to the description that it would take about these three days mentioned in the narrative to travel from Beersheba thither. On the other hand, it is argued that there is no distant view of Jerusalem to be obtained from the road by which Abraham must have approached the place. The Samaritans declare that Moriah means Moreh. Another view is that it was Mount Gerizim, but Gerizim could not have been reached in three days' journey.

² So the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

said, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the wood. Then he stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven, and



THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." Then the Lord said, "Lay not thine hand on the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me."

Then Abraham looked behind him, and saw a ram caught in the thicket by his horns, and he took the ram and offered it up for a sacrifice instead of Isaac his son.

Then the Lord spake again to him, saying, "Because thou hast done this thing, and not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me ; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy posterity as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand of the sea-shore for multitude. And in thy posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Then Abraham returned to the young men.

After these things Sarah died. At Kirjath-Arba she died, being one hundred and twenty-seven years old ; and Abraham came to mourn for her, and to weep for her.¹

And Abraham ceased from mourning for the dead, and spake to the children of Heth, saying, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you : give me the possession of a burial-place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

The children of Heth answered him, "Thou art a prince among us ; choose one of our sepulchres wherein to bury thy dead : none of us shall refuse thee his sepulchre."

Then Abraham bowed himself to them, and said, "If ye are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, intercede for me with Ephron, the son of Zohar, that he may sell me the cave of Machpelah that he hath, which is in the end of his field : for as much money as it is worth shall he sell it me for a burying-place."

Then Ephron the Hittite said to Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth—for he and they and

¹ It is not possible to say why, as appears from the narrative of Genesis, Abraham was not at Kirjath-Arba when Sarah died. Possibly it had been found necessary to divide the flocks and herds, and Abraham took charge of one, and Sarah—with, it may be, Isaac to help her—of the other. Isaac must have been about thirty-seven years old.

Abraham stood together in the gate of the city, where assembly was wont to be made—"My lord, I give thee the field and the cave; here in the presence of all the people I give it thee for a possession: bury thy dead."

Then Abraham bowed himself down, and said, "If thou art willing that I should have the field, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field. Take the money from me, then will I bury my dead."

Ephron answered him, "My lord, hearken unto me: The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; but what is that between me and thee?"

Then Abraham weighed to Ephron the four hundred shekels of silver, even the price which he had named in the presence of the people.¹ And the field was made over to him in the presence of all the people in this fashion:—

"The field of Ephron, which is in Machpelah, near to the oak of Mamre, the field and the cave that is therein, and all the trees that are in the field, and that are in the borders of it round about, are made sure to Abraham for a possession, in the presence of the children of Heth."

After this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah.

Abraham was now old, and it seemed good to him that he should find a wife for Isaac his son. So he spake to Eliezer of Damascus, who was his steward and the eldest servant of his house, and said, "Swear

¹ Four hundred shekels of silver would be about 200 oz., the shekel being nearly equivalent to half an ounce. At the present worth of silver this would be scarcely £40; but it is impossible to say what it would be actually equivalent to in those days. Probably the value would be something much larger. It is said in the narrative to have been "current money with the merchant." It must not be supposed, however, that the silver was coin. Coined money was not known for many years after Abraham's time. The metal was probably in bars or ingots, stamped with some regular mark, but of course weighed when any commercial transaction took place.

to me by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that thou wilt not take a wife for Isaac my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. Thou shalt go unto my own kindred, and take a wife from among them for my son."

Now Abraham knew that Nahor, his father's brother, had had sons born to him of Milcah, Sarah's sister, and that they dwelt in Haran, where he himself had dwelt before he came into the land of Canaan.

Then Eliezer answered, "Haply the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land: must I bring thy son again into the land from which thou camest out?"

Abraham said, "Beware that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, sware unto me that He would give this land to me, and to my children after me. If the woman will not follow thee, then thou shalt be free of thy oath: but, in any case, thou shalt not persuade my son to go back to that land."

Then Eliezer sware to his master that he would do his bidding.

And he took ten camels of his master's—for all Abraham's goods were in his hand—and departed to Haran, in Mesopotamia, which was the city of Nahor.

And when he was come to the city, he made his camels kneel down by a well that was outside the walls; and it was evening-time, when the women go out to draw water. He prayed, saying, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee, show kindness to my master Abraham. Let this come to pass: if the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher that I may drink, shall say, Drink, and I will draw for thy camels also; let the same be she whom Thou

hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac ; then shall I know that Thou hast showed kindness to my master."

And while he was yet speaking, Rebekah, that was the daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor and Milcah, came to the well. And she was a very fair virgin ; and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up again. Eliezer said to her, " Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water out of thy pitcher." So she let down her pitcher from her shoulder, whereon she carried it, to her hand, and gave him to drink. And when he had drunk, she said, " I will draw for thy camels also, till they shall have done drinking." So she hasted and emptied the pitcher into the trough, and went down again to the well, and drew for all the camels. And the man held his peace, wondering whether or not the Lord had prospered his journey. When the camels had done drinking, he gave her an ear-ring of gold of half a shekel in weight, and two bracelets that weighed ten shekels together. And he said to her, " Whose daughter art thou ? Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge ?" She answered, " I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor." Then the man bowed down his head and worshipped, saying, " Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, for He hath not forgotten His mercy and truth, but hath led me to the house of my master's brethren."

Meanwhile Rebekah ran and told all these things to her kindred. Now she had a brother, whose name was Laban ; and Laban, when he saw the ear-ring and the bracelets upon his sister's hands, and heard all that his sister said, went out to meet the man, and said, " Come in, thou blessed of the Lord ; wherefore standest thou without ? I have prepared thy lodging, and room for the camels."

Then Eliezer came into the house ; and Laban ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for his camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men that were with him. Meat also was set before him to eat ; but he said, "I will not eat, till I have told my errand." And Laban said, "Speak on."

The man said, "I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath greatly blessed my master, and he is become great ; for the Lord hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses. Sarah, my master's wife, bare him a son in his old age, and my master hath given him all that he hath. Now my master made me swear that I would not take a wife for his son from the daughters of Canaan, but would go to his own kindred to seek among them a wife for his son. So I came hither. And I prayed to God, and said, I will stand by the well ; and when the damsel cometh to draw water from the well, and I say to her, Give me to drink ; if the damsel say, Drink, and I will draw for thy camels also ; let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed for my master's son. And lo ! even before I had done speaking, Rebekah came down to draw water of the well. And she did as I had said. Then I asked her, Whose daughter art thou ? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, whom Milcah bare to Nahor. Then I put the ear-ring in her ear and the bracelets upon her hands. Then I bowed down my head and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to find a wife for my master's son among his own kindred. And now tell me whether ye will deal truly and kindly with my master, that I may go away ?"

Laban and Bethuel answered, "The thing is from the Lord : we cannot say bad or good. Behold,

Rebekah is here, take her to be the wife of thy master's son, as the Lord hath spoken."

Then Eliezer worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth. Also he brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and gave them to Rebekah. He gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. After this he and the men that were with him ate and drank, and tarried all night.

The next morning they rose up, and Eliezer said, "Send me away to my master."

But the damsel's mother and brother said, "Let Rebekah abide with us a few days, ten at the least."

But he said, "Hinder me not, seeing that the Lord hath prospered me; send me away to my master."

They answered, "We will call the damsel, and ask whether she be willing."

So they called Rebekah, and asked her, "Wilt thou go with this man?"

And Rebekah said, "I will go."

So they sent away Rebekah and her nurse¹ with Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed her, saying, "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and may thy children possess the gate of their enemies."

So Rebekah and her nurse, and the damsels that were with her, departed with Abraham's servant, riding upon camels. Now, when they came near to the place where Isaac dwelt, it chanced that Isaac had gone out into the field at eventide to meditate. When Rebekah saw him, she asked, "What man is that?" Eliezer answered her, "That is my master." Then she alighted from her camel, and covered herself with a veil. And Eliezer told Isaac all that he had done.

¹ The name of the nurse was Deborah. Her death and burial at Beth-el are recorded in Gen. xxxv.

So Rebekah became Isaac's wife, and he was comforted after his mother's death. Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife.

Abraham lived yet thirty and five years after these things. And he died in a good old age, being one hundred and seventy-five years old. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah,¹ which he had bought of Ephron the Hittite. By the side of Sarah his wife they buried him.

¹ The cave of Machpelah is one of the sites in the Holy Land about the identity of which there can be no manner of doubt. It is now covered by a mosque, which itself occupies the site of a Christian church, and indeed contains many remains of the old building. In this mosque are three shrines, which are the monuments respectively of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. These shrines are supposed to be over the actual tombs of these personages. The mosque has been inspected three times of late years by Christian visitors. These, on the last occasion, were permitted to see what they could of the outermost of the three chambers of the cave by help of a lamp, which was let down through a hole in the floor of the mosque. Nothing of importance, however, could be discovered in this. Possibly this outermost chamber is not part of the cave itself, which indeed was described in early times as having been double. Into the sepulchre itself no one has entered for many years. In fact, it is walled up. But in 1163, when the crusading forces still held possession of the Holy Land, a certain Benjamin of Tudela inspected the place. He speaks of two empty chambers, and a third in which are six sepulchres, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on one side, with those of Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah opposite to them. In this inner chamber were also many coffins filled with the bones of Israelites who desired to rest in the holy spot. The burial of Isaac is recorded in Gen. xxxv. 29. No mention is made of Rebekah's death or burial, but that she was buried in the cave appears from Gen. xlix. 31. Jacob's body was embalmed (Gen. l. 2), and probably remains intact to the present day.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

JACOB, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, married two wives, daughters of Laban the Syrian, Leah and Rachel by name. Of these he loved Rachel the better; but for many years she bare him no children. At the last, in the twenty-seventh year of her marriage, she bare a son, and called his name Joseph. Seven years afterwards she bare another son, whom she would have called Ben-oni, that is to say, "Son of my sorrow," for she knew that she was dying, but his father called him Ben-jamin, that is, "Son of my right hand." These two Jacob loved more than all his children, because they were the sons of his old age, and because Rachel, his best beloved, had borne them. In these days Jacob dwelt at Hebron with Isaac his father, and Joseph and Benjamin dwelt with him, and his other sons fed his flocks, wandering over the land from place to place, according as they found pasture.

When Joseph was seventeen years^c of age, Jacob made for him a dress of honour,¹ such as princes wore. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him

¹ The "coat of many colours" of the Authorised Version. The general opinion is that it was a long tunic made with sleeves, which may or may not have been ornamented with colours. The other interpretation is supported by a representation on an Egyptian tomb (of the twelfth dynasty, *circa* 2080 B.C.) in which strangers of race akin to the family of Jacob appear clad in garments of what we should call patchwork.

more than all his sons, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him. Moreover, they hated him for certain dreams which he told them. One of the dreams was this: "Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo! my sheaf arose, and stood upright; and your sheaves stood round about it, and made obeisance to it." And his brethren said to him, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us?"

After this he told his brethren another dream, saying, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream; the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." His father rebuked him, and said unto him, "Shall I and thy mother¹ and thy brethren indeed bow down before thee?"

After these things Jacob's elder sons went to feed the flocks in Shechem, and Jacob said to Joseph, "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and with the flocks; and bring me word again." So Joseph went from Hebron to Shechem.² And a certain man met him wandering in the open country, and said to him, "What seekest thou?" Joseph said, "I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks." The man said, "They are departed hence; I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan." So Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

When Joseph's brethren saw him coming, they said one to the other, "Behold, this master of dreams cometh;" and they conspired together to slay him. "We will slay him," they said, "and cast him into a pit, and we will say that some savage beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of

¹ "Thy mother" must mean his stepmother Leah, for Rachel must have been long since dead.

² Shechem, afterwards Samaria. Dothan (so called from its two wells) was twelve miles to the north.

his dreams." But Reuben said, "Shed no blood ; cast him into this pit, but lay not your hands upon him." This he said that he might save his life, for he had it in his mind to come back and take him out of the pit and deliver him to his father.

So the men stripped Joseph of his coat, the robe of honour that he wore, and cast him into the pit. But



JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN.

the pit had no water in it. After this they sat down to their meat. And as they ate, a caravan of Ishmaelites came by, travelling from Gilead to Egypt, with camels bearing loads of spices and balm and gum ladanum.¹ And Judah said to his brethren, "What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Let us not lay hands upon him, for he is

¹ A medicinal gum derived from a variety of the plant *cistus*.

our brother and our flesh. Let us rather sell him to the Ishmaelites." With this the men were content ; so they drew Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.

Now Reuben had departed from his brethren, seeking how he might save Joseph alive. But when he came again to the pit, thinking to draw him out of it, lo ! Joseph was not there. Then he rent his clothes, and returned to his brethren, and said, "The child is not, and I, whither shall I go ?" Then the men took Joseph's coat, and dipped it in the blood of a kid that they had killed. This they brought to their father, and said, "This have we found : know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." And he knew it, and said, "It is my son's coat ; a savage beast hath devoured him ; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces." Then he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth, and mourned for his son many days. And when his children would have comforted him, he refused to be comforted, saying, "I will go down to the dead for my son mourning."

Meanwhile the Ishmaelites carried Joseph into Egypt, and sold him to Potiphar, who was the captain of the king's executioners. And the Lord was with Joseph, and made all that he did to prosper in his hand ; and when his master perceived this, he made him overseer of his house, and put all that he had into his care. Now Joseph was fair of form and of face, and his master's wife would have tempted him to sin. But when he refused she accused him falsely to her husband. Then Joseph's master took him, and put him in the prison, where the king's prisoners were bound. But there also the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour with the keeper of the prisoners, so that the keeper committed

to his hand all the prisoners. Whatsoever was done in the prison, Joseph was the doer of it.

It came to pass after these things that the chief of the cupbearers and the chief of the confectioners had offended their master the king of Egypt, so that he cast them into prison, in the place where Joseph was bound. And the chief of the executioners put them into Joseph's charge ; and they continued there for the space of a year.

When the year was out each of them dreamed a dream ; and when Joseph visited them in the morning, he perceived that they were sad ; and he asked them, saying, "Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day ?" They answered, "We have dreamed each of us a dream, and there is no interpreter." Joseph said unto them, "Do not interpretations come from God ? tell me your dreams, I pray you."

Then the chief of the cupbearers told his dream. "In my dream I beheld a vine, and in this vine there were three branches ; and while I looked it budded and blossomed and brought forth grapes, and the grapes grew ripe. And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand ; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand."

Joseph answered, "This is the interpretation of thy dream : The three branches are three days : within three days Pharaoh shall take thee out of prison, and restore thee to thy place, and thou shalt give the cup into Pharaoh's hand, as thou was wont to do in former days. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness unto me, and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this place. For I was stolen away out of the land of my fathers ; and here also I have done no wrong that they should put me into the dungeon."

When the chief of the confectioners saw that the interpretation of the dream was good, he told his dream also, and said, "In my dream I had on my head three baskets of white bread ; and in the uppermost basket there were all manner of confections for Pharaoh ; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head."

Joseph answered, "This is the interpretation of thy dream : The three baskets are three days : within three days Pharaoh shall cut off thy head, and hang thy body on a tree ; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee."

And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast to all his servants ; and he took account of the chief of the cupbearers and the chief of the confectioners. The chief of the cupbearers he restored to his place again ; but he hanged the chief of the confectioners, doing even as Joseph had interpreted their dreams to them. Yet the chief of the cupbearers did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

At the end of two years Pharaoh the king dreamed a dream. He stood by the river of Egypt, and, behold, there came up out of the river seven heifers, fair of aspect and fat-fleshed ; and they fed in the seed-grass that was by the river-side. And, behold, seven other heifers came up out of the river, foul of aspect and lean-fleshed, and stood by the other heifers. And the lean-fleshed heifers did eat up the seven that were fat-fleshed, and when they had eaten them up they were still lean-fleshed as at the beginning. So Pharaoh awoke.

And he slept, and dreamed a second time. He saw seven cars growing on one stalk, fat and good. And, behold, seven cars, thin and blasted with the wind

of the desert,¹ sprang up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven fat and full ears. Then Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.

The next day his spirit was troubled, and he called for all the magicians and all the wise men of Egypt, and told them his dreams; but there was no one that could interpret them to him. Then said the chief of the cupbearers, "I do remember my fault this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me and the chief of the confectioners in the prison; and we both of us dreamed a dream one night. And there was a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the executioners; he interpreted our dreams to us. And it came to pass that as he interpreted, so it fell out: me Pharaoh restored to my office, but the chief of the confectioners he hanged."

Then Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and stood before Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee that when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret it."

Joseph answered, "It is not in me to interpret a dream: the power is of God."

Then Pharaoh told his dreams, how that the seven lean heifers and the seven lean ears of corn had devoured the fat, and were none the better.

Joseph said, "The dreams of Pharaoh are the same: God hath shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven fat heifers and the seven fat ears are seven years of plenty; and the seven lean heifers and the seven lean ears are years of famine. Behold, there

¹ Not the east wind, but the south-east, or sirocco that blows from the desert, and, if it blows long enough, destroys the grass.

come seven years of plenty throughout all the land of Egypt; and after them shall come seven years of famine, so grievous that all the plenty shall be forgotten; for the famine shall consume the land. And that the dream was doubled signifieth this: the thing is sure, and will come to pass quickly. Now therefore let



JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAMS.

Pharaoh do this: let him look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh also appoint overseers over the land, who shall take up the fifth part of the harvest in the seven plenteous years, and store it away in granaries, keeping it in the king's possession, that the land be not destroyed through the famine."

This counsel seemed good to Pharaoh and his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we

find such a man as this, one in whom is the Spirit of God?" And he said to Joseph, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and over all the land of Egypt; there shall be none greater than thee save myself only." Then he took off the



THE RULER OF EGYPT.

ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand. Also he caused him to be arrayed in fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and made him ride in his second chariot; and men cried before him, "Bow the knee."

Pharaoh gave to Joseph a new name, that is, Zaphnath-paaneah, which is, being interpreted, "Food of life." Also he gave him to wife Asenath, that was daughter of Potipherah, the priest of the sun. And

Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh.

In the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls; and Joseph went through the land of Egypt, and gathered the harvests, and laid them up in the cities. That which was grown in the land round about each city, that he laid up in the city. He gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he ceased to number it; for indeed it was without number.

Asenath bare two sons to Joseph before the years of famine. The first-born he called Manasseh, which, being interpreted, is "forgetting"; for, he said, "God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." The younger son he called Ephraim, that is, "doubly fruitful"; for, he said, "God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." And the seven years of plenty ended, and the seven years of dearth began. The dearth was in all lands; but in the land of Egypt there was food—that is to say, in the king's granaries. And the people of Egypt came to the granaries to buy, and from other lands also many came to buy.

So Joseph gathered up all the money that was in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the corn which the people thereof bought; and he brought the money into Pharaoh's house. And when money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, "Give us bread. Wilt thou see us die? for we have no money left."

Joseph said, "Give me your cattle; I will give you corn in exchange for your cattle, if your money hath failed."

So they brought their cattle unto Joseph, and Joseph gave them corn in exchange for horses, and

sheep, and cattle, and asses. All that year he fed them with corn in exchange for their cattle.

The next year they came to him again, and said unto him, "We will not hide from my lord how that all our money is spent; our cattle also thou hast; and now there is nought left to us but our bodies and our lands. Wherefore should we die before thine eyes? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be a possession to Pharaoh."

So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for the Egyptians sold every man his field, so sore was the famine. Only the land of the priests did he not buy, for the priests had a portion of corn assigned to them by Pharaoh; therefore they had no need to sell their lands.

Then Joseph said to the Egyptians, "Behold, ye and your lands are Pharaoh's. Here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And this shall be the law for you henceforth: the fifth part of the increase of the land shall be Pharaoh's; the other four parts ye shall keep for yourselves, for the seed that ye shall sow, and for your food."

The Egyptians answered, "Thou hast saved our lives: let us find favour in thy sight, and in the sight of Pharaoh."

So it became a law in the land of Egypt that the fifth part of the produce was Pharaoh's.¹

¹ It may be as well to say a few words about the policy which Joseph is here described as pursuing. Its immediate object seems to have been the taking of effectual precautions against the recurrence of famine in the future. It is clear that the people had made no effectual provision against the disaster, though they must have had some warning of its approach when they saw Joseph's preparations. If it had not been for these something like an absolute destruction of the population must have taken place. But, for the future, the rulers of Egypt, entitled as they were to receive the fifth part of the annual produce, would have it in their power to guard against this danger. At the same time it may well be that some evils followed this change in the relation between the people and their sovereign.

Now the famine was sore in the land of Canaan, as it was in all the lands round about. And when Jacob knew that there was corn in Egypt, he said unto his sons, "Why do ye sit here, and look one upon another, and do nothing? Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; go down thither and buy, that we may live and not die."

So Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, his mother's son, Jacob sent not with them; for he said, "Peradventure some mischief will happen to him."

So the sons of Jacob came to buy corn, and it was Joseph who sold the corn to all that came. And Joseph's brethren stood before him, and bowed themselves down before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And he remembered how he had dreamt that they should bow themselves down to the ground before him. Then he said to them, "Ye are spies; ye are come to see the weak places of the land."

The men answered, "We are sons of one man; we are true men; we are no spies."

But he said again, "Ye are spies."

They made answer, "We are twelve brethren; sons of one man in the land of Canaan; one, who is the youngest of us, is with our father, and one is not."

Joseph said to them, "By the life of Pharaoh, ye shall not go home till your youngest brother come. Thus shall ye prove that ye are no spies. Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; but if not, then I shall know that ye are spies."

The benefits derived from even the wisest and most benevolent despotism are not purchased for nothing. The people were safeguarded against famine, but they lost something of their freedom, which, indeed, it may be said, they bartered, as the Roman populace bartered it long afterwards, for bread.

So he kept them in prison for three days ; and on the third day he said, " I would not wrong you, for I fear God. This shall ye do, and live. Let one of you remain in prison, and the rest shall carry back corn for the need of your houses. Afterwards ye shall come again, but ye shall bring back your youngest brother with you."

Then they remembered how they had dealt with Joseph, and they said one to another, " We are verily guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us to spare him, and we would not hear. Therefore is this distress come upon us." And Reuben said, " Did I not speak unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child ? but ye would not hear. Behold, his blood is required of us."

They knew not that Joseph understood them when they thus spoke among themselves, for he had spoken to them through an interpreter. But Joseph, when he heard these things, turned away and wept. Afterwards he spoke to them again, and took Simeon,¹ and bound him before their eyes.

Then Joseph commanded his servants to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore to every man his money, and also to find them provision for the way.

When they rested for the night,² one of them, opening his sack, found his money in his sack's mouth, and said to his brethren, " See, my money is restored." And they were afraid, saying, " What is this that God hath done to us ? "

¹ There can be little doubt, from what we hear of Simeon's character, that he was chosen as having been a ringleader in the cruel act.

² The word " inn " means nothing more than a resting-place or station on the journey. Inns, in our sense of the word, were unknown in the East ; and even the substitute for them, the khan or caravanserai, providing shelter for the traveller, can scarcely be supposed to have existed at this early time.

So they returned to Jacob, and told him all that had happened to them. "The man who is the lord of the country," they said, "spake roughly to us, and said, Ye are spies; and we said, We are true men; we are no spies: we are twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone: and bring your youngest brother unto me; then shall I know that ye are no spies, but true men; so will I deliver you your brother whom ye shall leave with me, and ye shall traffic in the land." And when they emptied their sacks, lo! every man's bundle of money was in his sack. And when they and their father saw the bundles of money they were afraid.

And Jacob their father said unto them, "Me have ye bereaved of my children. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye would take Benjamin away; all these things are against me."

Then Reuben said to his father, "Slay my two sons if I bring him not back to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him back to thee again."

But Jacob said, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief shall befall him by the way, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

The famine was still sore in the land; and when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought back out of the land of Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Go again, buy us a little food."

And Judah answered, "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our

brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food ; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down ; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you."

And Jacob said, "Why did ye deal so ill with me as to tell the man that ye had yet a brother?"

They said, "The man questioned us closely of our family, and we told him. Could we know that he would say, Bring your brother down?"

Then Judah said to his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go ; that we may live, and not die. I will be surety for him ; of my hand thou shalt require him : if I bring him not back, then let me bear the blame for ever. And, indeed, had we not lingered, we had now returned a second time."

Then Jacob said, "If it must be so, do this ; take of the best fruits of the land, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and gum ladanum, and nuts¹ and almonds : and take double money in your sacks, with the money that was returned to you. Peradventure it was an oversight. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

Then the men did as their father had bidden them, and went down into Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

And when Joseph saw Benjamin, his brother, he said to the steward of his household, "Slay, and make ready : for these men shall dine with me at noon." And the steward brought them into Joseph's house. But they were afraid when they were brought into the house, and said among themselves, "This is on account of the money that was returned to us in our sacks ; he seeketh a pretext to take our asses, and to take us for

¹ Pistachio nuts.

slaves." So they told the steward of how they had found the money in their sacks. And he said to them, "Peace be to you ; fear not. Your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks : I had your money." And he brought Simeon to them. Then he brought them into Joseph's house, and gave them water for their feet and provender for their asses. And the men made ready their present before Joseph should come at noon, for they had heard that they were to dine with him.

When Joseph came they gave him the present, and bowed themselves before him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake ? is he yet alive ?" They said, "Thy servant our father is yet alive, and in good health." And they bowed down their heads. And when he saw Benjamin, his mother's son, he said, "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me ?" And he said, "God be gracious unto thee, my son." And he turned away in haste, for his heart went out to his brother ; and he sought a place where he might weep ; and entering into his chamber, he wept there.

Then he washed his face, and went out and refrained himself, and said, "Set on bread." So they set on for him by himself, and for the men by themselves, and for the Egyptians by themselves. And the men sat before him, placed according to their age ; and they marvelled that a stranger should know it. Also Joseph sent messes to them from his own table ; but Benjamin's mess was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

And Joseph commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in the

mouth of his sack. And put my silver cup in the sack of the youngest, with his corn-money." And the steward did so.

When it was light in the morning, the men were sent away. But before they had gone far from the city, Joseph said unto his steward, "Up, follow them; and when thou dost overtake them, say to them, Wherefore have ye returned evil for good? Is not this the cup from which my lord drinketh, and whereby he divineth?"¹

And he overtook them, and spake to them as his master had bidden him.

Then they answered, "Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do so. Behold, we brought again the money that we found in our sacks' mouths: wherefore should we steal silver or gold out of thy lord's house? With whomsoever of thy servants the cup shall be found, let him die, and we will be thy lord's bondmen." And the steward said, "He with whom the cup shall be found shall be taken as a bondman; but the rest shall go blameless."

So the man searched, beginning with the eldest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and laded their asses, and returned to the city. And when they came to Joseph's house they fell down before him. And he said, "What deed is this that ye have done? did ye not know that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

Then Judah said, "How shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out our iniquity: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and he with whom the cup was found."

But Joseph said, "God forbid that I should deal so

¹ This was done either by dropping articles into the liquor and observing their appearance, or by watching the surface.

with you : he with whom the cup was found shall be my servant ; but ye shall go in peace to your father."

Then Judah came near, and said, " Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in thine ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant ; for thou art as Pharaoh unto us. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother ? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and he has a child of his old age ; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst, Bring him down. And we said, The lad cannot leave his father ; for his father would die. And thou saidst, Except your youngest brother be with you, ye shall not see my face. So when our father said, Go again, buy us a little food, we said, We cannot go down ; for we cannot see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons : the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn to pieces ; nor have I seen him again : and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. When therefore I shall come to my father, and he shall see that the lad is not with me, he will die : so will thy servants bring down the gray hairs of our father with sorrow to the grave. Now thy servant became a surety to my father for the lad, saying, If I bring him not again to thee, let me bear the blame for ever. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me ? " ¹

¹ It is hardly necessary to point out that the seeming harshness of Joseph in his dealings with his brothers was simply designed to put them to a test. He desired to see whether they had really been changed for the better, and felt a genuine repentance for the wrong done to him. Judah's speech convinces him. He has learnt self-sacrifice. The fierce jealousy of the father's favourite that had almost led to murder in the early

Then Joseph could not refrain himself any longer, and he cried, "Let every man go forth;" and there stood no man with him when he made himself known to his brethren; but the Egyptians and the household of Pharaoh heard his weeping, for he wept aloud.



JOSEPH MADE KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN.

Then he said to his brethren, "I am Joseph: doth my father yet live?"

And his brethren could not answer him, for they were confounded.

Then he said to his brethren, "Come near, I pray you."

And they came near. Then Joseph said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now

days is now changed to an affectionate sympathy, which is ready for any sacrifice, so that the father's heart should not be wounded again.

be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither ; for God sent me before you to preserve your lives. For the famine hath been in the land two years, and there are yet five years during which there shall be neither ploughing nor harvest. So, therefore, it is not ye that sent me hither, but God ; and He hath made me chief counsellor to Pharaoh, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Hasten, and go up to my father, and say to him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt ; come down to me, tarry not : and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen,¹ and be near me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and all that thou hast. And there will I nourish thee, for there are yet five years of famine, lest thou and thy household come to poverty. And now ye see, and Benjamin² seeth, that it is indeed I that speak to you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen ; and ye shall hasten and bring down my father hither."

And he fell upon Benjamin's neck and wept ; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them ; and after that they spoke together.

And it was told Pharaoh that Joseph's brethren were come ; and it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, " Bid your brethren lade their asses, and go to the land of Canaan, and bring back thence your father and your households : and I will give you the best part of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Take carriages out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and your wives, and

¹ Goshen was in Lower Egypt, *east* of the Nile (which the Israelites had not to cross in leaving Egypt), but more than this it is impossible to say.

² Benjamin must have been about nine or ten years old when Joseph was lost.

bring your father, and come. And do not regard your furniture; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

And Joseph gave his brethren carriages, according to Pharaoh's commandment, and provision for the way. And to all of them he gave changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave five changes of raiment, and three hundred shekels of silver. To his father he sent ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and meat and bread for his father by the way. So he sent his brothers away, and when they were departing he said, "See that ye fall not out by the way."¹

So they returned into the land of Canaan to their father, and told him, saying, "Joseph is yet alive, and is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob believed them not. Then they told him all the words of Joseph; and when he saw the carriages that Joseph had sent, his spirit revived within him; and he said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is alive: I will go and see him before I die."

So Jacob came down into the land of Egypt, he and his sons and all his family;² and Judah went before him to tell Joseph of his coming. Then Joseph made ready his chariot, and went to meet his father in the land of Goshen. And he fell on his father's neck, and wept a long time. Then Jacob said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face."

¹ They might endeavour to shift the blame one on to the other, especially as they would have to make to their father a painful confession of their past wickedness. But Dr. Kalisch would translate, "Be not afraid by the way." They were not to apprehend any interruption such as had occurred to them twice before on their return journeys to Canaan.

² The total is given at *seventy*, *i.e.* sixty-six children and grandchildren of Jacob, Joseph and his two sons, born in Egypt, and Jacob himself. The number seems to have been chosen for reasons which cannot be here explained; but it is clearly arrived at by many omissions. The actual number must have been larger.

Then Joseph said to his brethren, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh that ye are come; and that ye are shepherds and breeders of cattle, and that ye have brought your flocks and herds with you. And when Pharaoh shall ask you your occupation, say ye, We have been breeders of cattle from our youth up, we and our fathers before us. So will he put you in the land of Goshen, that ye may dwell by yourselves, for the Egyptians have no favour for shepherds."

Then Joseph presented five of his brethren to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to them, "What is your occupation?"

They said, "We are shepherds, we and our fathers before us. And now we are come to sojourn in thy land; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is heavy in the land of Canaan: now, therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "The land of Egypt is before thee. Let thy father and brethren dwell in the best of it; if they would dwell in the land of Goshen, let it be so: and if thou knowest any men of ability among them, make them overseers of my cattle."

And Joseph brought his father into Pharaoh's presence; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old art thou?" Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty: few and evil have been my days, and have not attained to the age of my fathers."¹

And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence.

And Joseph caused his father and his brethren to

¹ Abraham is said to have died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five, Isaac at that of one hundred and eighty.

dwelt in the land of Goshen, and supported them during the years of famine.

Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. And being now very infirm, he sent for Joseph and said to him, "Swear to me that thou wilt not bury me in Egypt. I will lie with my fathers. Therefore thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place." And Joseph swore that he would do so.

After this it was told Joseph, "Thy father is very sick." So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And when Jacob heard that Joseph was come, he strengthened himself, and sat up on his bed. And Jacob said to Joseph, "God said to me at Bethel that He would make of me a multitude of people, and give me the land for a possession. Now, therefore, thy two sons that were born to thee in Egypt before I came down thither, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be as Reuben and Simeon. For they are thy sons, and thou art the son of Rachel, whom I saw die in the land of Canaan, on the way to Ephrath."

And Jacob saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?" Joseph said, "They are my two sons, whom God hath given me here." Then Jacob said, "Bring them to me, and I will bless them." Now Jacob's eyes were dim with age, so that he could not see. And he said to Joseph, "I had not hoped to see thy face: and now God hath permitted me to see thy children." Then Joseph brought the two near to Jacob, setting Manasseh, that was the elder, by Jacob's right hand, and Ephraim, the younger, by his left. But Jacob reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, and put his left hand on Manasseh. Then Joseph was displeased, and he would have removed his father's right hand from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's,

saying, "Not so, my father : for this is the first-born ; put thy right hand upon his head." But his father refused, saying, "I know it, my son, I know it : he also shall become a people, he also shall be great : but his younger brother shall be greater than he." And he blessed them. To Joseph also he said, "Behold, I die : but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers."

After these things Jacob died, having first blessed his children. And Joseph fell upon his face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And he commanded his servants the physicians to embalm him. And after the days of mourning, even seventy days, were ended, Joseph said to Pharaoh, "My father made me swear that I would bury him in the grave of his fathers in the land of Canaan. Now, I pray thee, let me go up and bury my father, and I will return." So Joseph went up to bury his father, and the servants of Pharaoh and the elders of Egypt went up with him ; his brethren also went with him, and all his father's house. And they buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought as a burying-place of Ephron the Hittite.

And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, "Peradventure Joseph will hate us, and fully requite us all the evil that we did unto him." And they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Thy father commanded us before he died that we should give thee this message, Forgive, I pray thee, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin ; for they did thee evil." And Joseph wept when they spake to him. His brethren also went and fell down before him, saying, "Behold, we are thy servants." And Joseph said, "Fear not : ye meant evil against me, but God meant good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day, that I should

preserve alive much people. Now therefore fear not, for I will nourish you and your children." So he spake kindly to them, and comforted them.

And Joseph dwelt in Egypt. He lived one hundred and ten years, and he saw Ephraim's children of the third generation, and the children of Machir the son of Manasseh he adopted for his own. And he said to his brethren, "I die; but God will surely remember and bring you to the land which He sware to your fathers." And he made them swear that when this should be they should carry his bones out of the land of Egypt.¹ So Joseph died, and the physicians embalmed him, and they put his body in a coffin.

And when the children of Israel departed out of Egypt they carried with them the bones of Joseph, and buried them in Shechem, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem.

¹ For the question of who was "Joseph's Pharaoh" see the first note in the "Story of Moses."

THE STORY OF MOSES

I.—In Egypt

NOT many years after the death of Joseph much trouble and affliction began to fall upon the children of Israel. They multiplied indeed and increased exceedingly, so that the land of Goshen, in which Joseph had set them at the first, was too narrow for them, and they were constrained to seek their livelihood elsewhere. Also there arose a king in Egypt that knew not Joseph, nor remembered all the benefits that he had done to the land.¹ This man, knowing that there was danger to his kingdom from the nations round about,² and

¹ It seems tolerably well established that the migration of the Israelites into Egypt took place during the reign of the last of the Hyksôs or Shepherd Kings—a dynasty which ruled for many years in Lower Egypt. Apepi, the last of this dynasty, was defeated by Aahmes, king of Upper Egypt, and founder of the eighteenth dynasty. The Hyksôs were then driven out. It would appear, however, that Joseph did not share the fate of the monarch who had promoted him. The ruler who is described as the “king who knew not Joseph,” is supposed to have been Seti I., who ascended the throne at the close of the eighteenth dynasty. As regards the *numbers* of the Israelites, it has been calculated that the total of the immigrants was about three thousand (including of course the slaves). These had increased at the time of the Exodus to about two millions—if the number can be trusted (numbers are always uncertain). This increase is said to have taken a period of four hundred years. Here again the number is very uncertain.

² There are reasons for believing that a confederacy of Egypt's neighbours on the north and east was threatening her at this time. Her power was certainly much smaller than it had been two or three centuries before.

seeing that there dwelt in the midst of it this nation of strangers, said to his people, "Behold, the children of Israel are more in number and mightier than we are. Let us, therefore, so deal with them that they may not multiply yet more, lest when our enemies make war against us they give themselves to them, and fight against us, and so escape from the land, and we lose their service." So he oppressed them with heavy tasks of labour, as the building of treasure cities,¹ and the like. But the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied, so that the Egyptians were afraid of them. Then the king set them to labour at the making of bricks, and to do all manner of service in the field—planting, and reaping, and drawing water from the river. All their service that they were constrained to render was made hard and grievous. Yet for all this their numbers increased more and more. Then the king commanded that their male children should be killed at the birth, and when he found that this was not done, he commanded that the male children should be cast into the river, but the female children he suffered to live.

Now there was in those days a certain Amram, who was of the tribe of Levi, who had taken to wife his father's sister,² Jochebed by name. This Amram had two children, the elder a damsel of some sixteen years. Miriam by name; and the younger a male child of three years or thereabouts, whose name was Aaron. And now there was born unto him yet another son. Him, because he was a goodly child, his mother hid in the house for six months. And when she could no

¹ Pithom and Rameses, both in Eastern Egypt, are mentioned as having been built by Hebrew labour.

² These marriages, afterwards forbidden, were at that time lawful among the Israelites, as they seem to have been among the Egyptians. They are still allowed, by special dispensation, in the Roman Church.

longer hide him, she made an ark of bulrushes,¹ and daubed it within with mud and without with pitch. In this she put the child, and laid it in the flags by the brink of the stream. And Miriam, the child's sister, stood afar off to see what should happen to him.

Now it so chanced that Pharaoh had a daughter that was married, but had no children. She came



THE FINDING OF MOSES.

down to bathe in the river, and her maidens walked by the river-side. And when Pharaoh's daughter saw the ark among the flags she sent her maid to fetch it. When she had opened it she saw the child ; and, behold, the child wept. Then she had compassion on the babe, and said, " This is one of the Hebrews' children."

¹ The papyrus, a reed growing in great quantities by the Nile, and famous as the material out of which the Egyptians made *paper*.

When Miriam saw what was done to the babe, she drew near, and said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?"

Pharaoh's daughter said, "Go."

Then the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give thee thy wages." So the woman took the child away, and nursed him. And when he was of a proper age, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became the son of Pharaoh's daughter, who called him *Moses*, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."¹

Thus did the son of Amram come to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.²

As the child grew he was taught all that it became a son of the royal house to know. He had such bodily training as it was the custom for youths that were nobly born to receive, being taught to wrestle, and to strike and parry with the sword, and to throw a javelin at the

¹ If the word is Hebrew, it is derived from *māshāh*, to draw out. If, on the other hand, it is Egyptian, it is derived, according to Josephus, from two words—*mo*, "water," and *ses* or *uses*, "saved." The first of these two words we know from other sources to have been really one of the Egyptian equivalents for water.

² Josephus relates an incident which, if his story be true, must have happened in the early childhood of Moses, very soon after he had been brought back from his mother's home. The princess, who bears in the narrative of Josephus the name of Thermuthis, eager to exhibit the beauty and cleverness of her adopted child, brought him into the royal presence-chamber, and set him upon her father's knee. The king took his crown and put it upon the child's head. Thereupon the child got down from the king's lap, closely examined the crown, and putting it on the ground, stood upon it. An Egyptian sage, who had shortly before prophesied the birth of a Hebrew child who should lay the power of Egypt in the dust, cried out, "This is the child, O king, whom the gods bid us slay for our security. See how he bears witness to the prophecy! He has put thy sovereignty beneath him, and tramples thy crown under his feet." Thermuthis thereupon caught up the child and carried him away; nor did the king attempt to carry out the advice which had been given him.

mark. Also he learnt to read and to write,¹ and to reckon with numbers,² and to play on instruments of music. He learnt also concerning geometry, or the measuring of land, and concerning the motions of the sun and the moon and the stars, and all the knowledge which was found in Egypt in those days.³ Very wise was he, and also mighty in words and deeds.

¹ The writing which Moses would learn would be the hieroglyphic. In this the characters were various animals, both birds and beasts, such as the eagle, the owl, the hawk, the ibis, the lion, wild goat, crocodile, etc. Each of these had to be drawn with such distinctness that it could not be mistaken for anything else. A good writer would have, therefore, to be something of an artist. The word *hieroglyphic* signifies the engraving or drawing of holy objects. The other form of handwriting at that time in use among the Egyptians was the *hieratic*, a running hand which was substantially the same as the hieroglyphic. The *demotic* character was of much later invention.

² The Egyptians invented some of the signs for numbers which we still use (the first four). These signs are commonly called Arabic, but it would be more correct to call them Egyptian. Their superiority in point of convenience over the Greek and Roman methods of numeration is very great.

³ Geometry, or rather trigonometry, is said to have been invented in Egypt under the pressure of the necessity that there was for the continual remeasurement of the land, altered as it was from year to year by the inundations of the river. In astronomy the Egyptians had made considerable progress, thanks to the unusual advantages afforded them by an almost rainless climate. They observed eclipses, the motions and occultations of the planets, and other phenomena of the heavens, and they mapped out the fixed stars into constellations. The best proof of their practical knowledge is that they came very near to a right determination of the length of the solar year, making it to consist of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days; a calculation so close to the truth that it causes an error of very little more than one day in a hundred years. The Roman year, on the other hand, was so inexact that the calendar came to be quite out of accord with the seasons. The ground for supposing that Moses was instructed in these branches of knowledge is, besides the intrinsic probability, the declaration of St. Stephen in his speech before the Sanhedrin that Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii. 22). The words "he was mighty in words and in deeds," are not improbably illustrated by the narrative given by Josephus of Moses' military achievements in the Egyptian service, a narrative which may be thus paraphrased.

When he was grown to man's age, Moses, as some relate, did good service with the armies of Egypt when these fought against the Ethiopians. For the Egyptians, having marched into the land of the Ethiopians, were defeated by them in a great battle, and driven back into their own country.

And now came the time when he must needs choose between two things, whether he would suffer affliction with his own people or enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. For if he still dwelt in the king's court, he must needs do as they of the court were wont to do, following evil ways, and bowing down to false gods. And because he had faith, believing in the things that were unseen, he chose the hard lot of the people of God rather than all the riches and honours that would have come in due course to the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Having thus resolved in his heart, he went to visit his brethren, the children of Israel, and to see with his own eyes the burdens of labour that they bare. And he was now full forty years of age. While he was doing this, he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew; then he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man near, he smote the Egyptian, and hid his body in the sand, for the place where this was done was near to the borders of the desert. —

The next day when he went out, he saw two men And when the Ethiopians followed them thither, they could not make any head against the invaders, but were driven from city to city, till they came to the very border of their land, even to the shore of the Great Sea. Thereupon, being in the last extremity, they inquired of the oracles what they should do that Egypt might be saved. The oracles made answer, "Use the Hebrew for your helper." Now "the Hebrew" was Moses, whom men knew already to be brave and skilful in arms. So the Egyptians made him captain of their host. Thereupon he led the army into the land of the Ethiopians. The host that was sent against him he defeated in a great battle, and when his men were much troubled by the serpents that abound in those regions, he abated this plague by means of a number of birds which they call the ibis [Herodotus speaks of the ibis as being held in honour by the Egyptians because it destroys serpents] that he had brought with him. Thus he conquered the whole land of the Ethiopians till he came to their chief city, of which the name was Saba and afterwards Meroë. This, they say, Moses and his men assaulted many times in vain. But at the last the daughter of the king of the Ethiopians, whose name was Tharbis, seeing that the captain of the Egyptians was of singular courage and beauty, loved him. And she persuaded her father that he should make peace with the Egyptians. This he did, and Moses took Tharbis to wife, and returned in great honour into the land of Egypt.

of the Hebrews striving together, and said to him that did the wrong, "Why smitest thou thy fellow?" And he said, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday?" When Moses heard the man speak thus, he was afraid, for he said to himself, "Surely the thing



MOSES SLAYS THE EGYPTIAN.

that I did in slaying the Egyptian is known." And indeed it was known to Pharaoh, so that Pharaoh sought to slay Moses, and he fled into the land of Midian,¹ and sat down by a well.

¹ Moses would naturally seek to escape by going eastward. The sea barred his way on the north and the desert on the west, while if he went southward he would have to traverse a thickly populated country under Egyptian rule for a distance of about seven hundred miles. He would therefore cross the isthmus of Suez (which, supposing that he started from Memphis, would not be more than a hundred miles distant). He would

As he sat there there came the seven daughters of Reuel, that was priest of Midian, to the well to draw water for their flocks. But while they were filling the troughs, the shepherds came and drove them away. Then Moses stood up and helped them, making the shepherds cease from troubling them, and drawing water for their flocks.

When they came back to Reuel their father, he said to them, "How is it that ye are come so soon to-day?"

They said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us and for our flock."

Then Reuel said, "Where is he? why have ye left him? Call him hither, that he may eat bread with us."

So they called Moses, and he sat down and ate bread with Reuel and his daughters. And afterwards he was content to dwell with Reuel and to be his servant. After a while Reuel gave him his daughter Zipporah to be his wife, and Zipporah bare him a son, whom Moses called by the name of Gershom, which word signifies "a stranger there," for he said, "I have been a stranger in a strange land." Afterwards she bare him another son. Him he named Eliezer, which, being interpreted, signifies, "My God hath holpen me." As the years went on, Reuel died, and Jethro his son was priest in his stead.

It came to pass when Moses had dwelt in the land of Midian near upon forty years, that seeking to find new pasture for his flocks, he led them to the far side of the desert, near to Horeb, the mount of God. And as he walked, leading his flocks, as shepherds are wont to

avoid the western regions of the Arabian peninsula, as being under the power of Pharaoh, and make his way down to the eastern branch of the Red Sea, the country inhabited by the Midianites.

do in that country,¹ he saw a little way off a flame of fire coming out of a bush,² and lo! the bush burned with fire, and yet was not consumed. Then Moses said to himself, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed."

When the Lord saw that Moses turned aside to see, He called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said,



THE BURNING BUSH.

"Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Behold, here am I." Then God said to him, "Draw not nigh. Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And Moses did so. Then

¹ The shepherd of the East goes before his flock (so our Lord in St. John x. 4, "When he putteth forth his sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice"). The Western shepherd follows it.

² The bush was an acacia thorn, a plant very common in the desert. It is the "shittim" of Scripture.

the Lord spake unto him, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

Then the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and have heard their cry which they cry unto Me because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of the land of bondage into a good land and a large, a land that floweth with milk and honey, the land of the seven nations of the Canaanites. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

And Moses said unto God, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Then God said to Moses, "Certainly I will be with thee. And this shall be a token to thee, that in this very mountain thou shalt serve Me when thou shalt have brought the children of Israel out of Egypt."

And Moses said unto God, "When I shall come to the children of Israel, and shall say to them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I answer them?"

God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM. Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM¹ hath sent me to you. Thou shalt say also, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me unto you. And thou shalt gather the elders, and say unto them, The Lord God of your

¹ "I AM" is connected with the name "Jehovah" or Jahveh. Compare also Isa. xlv. 6, "I am, and there is none beside me."

fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, I have surely seen what is done to My people in Egypt, and I will bring them up out of their affliction into the land of the Canaanites, a land that floweth with milk and honey. Thus shalt thou speak to the children of Israel. And afterwards thou shalt go, thou and the elders of the people with thee, into the presence of Pharaoh, and say to him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us. Let us go therefore three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. But I know that he will not let you go, but will keep you by force. Then I will stretch out My hand, and smite the land of Egypt with many plagues. After that he will let you go."

Then Moses answered and said, "Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto me ; but will say, The Lord hath not appeared to thee."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "What is that in thy hand?"

Moses said, "It is a rod."

The Lord said, "Cast it on the ground." And when he cast it on the ground it became a serpent ; and Moses fled for fear of it.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Put forth thy hand, and take this serpent by the tail."

So he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod as at the first.

Then said the Lord, "This shalt thou do that they may believe that I have appeared to thee. And now, again, put thy hand into the fold of thy robe."

So Moses put his hand into the fold, and when he took it out again, it was covered with leprosy, as white as snow. Then the Lord said, "Put it in again." So he put it in again, and when he pulled it out a second time, it was whole as his other flesh. And the Lord

said, "If they will not believe the first sign, then they shall believe the second. But if they will not believe the two signs, thou shalt take water from the river of Egypt, and pour it upon the dry land, and the water shall become blood upon the land."

Then Moses said, "Behold, Lord, I am not eloquent, nor have ever been, but am slow of speech."

And the Lord said to him, "It is I only that make men eloquent or dumb, that give them sight or make them to be blind, that cause them to hear or to be deaf; go, I will be with thee, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

But Moses said, "Lord, send whom Thou wilt, only that Thou send not me."

Then was the Lord angry with Moses, and said to him, "Is not Aaron thy brother? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he cometh forth to meet thee. He shall speak for thee, and thou shalt put the words into his mouth, and he shall be thy spokesman to the people. And thou shalt take this rod in thy hand, that thou mayest do signs therewith."

Then Moses returned from Horeb to Jethro, his brother-in-law, and said to him, "Let me return to Egypt, to my brethren, that I may see whether they be yet alive."

And Jethro said, "Go in peace."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Thou shalt say to Pharaoh, Israel is My first-born. If thou wilt not let him go, then will I slay thy first-born."

So Moses returned to the land of Egypt. And Aaron came out to meet him, and kissed him. Then Moses told him all that the Lord had said unto him.

After this the two sent to all the elders of the children of Israel wherever they dwelt throughout the land of Egypt, bidding them come together to them.

And when the elders were assembled, Aaron stood forth, and spake to them all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses.

When the elders asked him, "What sign showest thou that the Lord hath sent thee, and that thou speakest not these things of thine own self, then he did in their sight the three signs that the Lord had commanded. First, he threw down his staff, and it became a serpent in the sight of all the assembly. Then he thrust his hand into his robe and brought it out white with leprosy; and then, thrusting it in a second time, brought it whole as at the first. And, finally, he took water out of the river, and poured it upon the ground, and it became blood in their sight. When the elders saw these three signs they indeed believed that the Lord had visited His people, and had looked upon their affliction to deliver them. So they bowed their heads, and worshipped.

II.—The Going Forth

After these things Moses and Aaron his brother went in, and stood before Pharaoh,¹ king of Egypt, Moses being fourscore years old and Aaron fourscore and three. And they said unto the king, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness."

Pharaoh answered, "Who is the Lord that I should

¹ This Pharaoh was Menepthah, son and successor of Ramses II. The titles which this king is found assuming to himself on the monuments seem to show a peculiar exaltation of pride. He seems to identify himself with Deity, calling himself "the good god," "the son of the sun," "the Harus rejoicing in truth." Hence the message of the two brothers, as coming from a divinity whom he could have heard of only as the god of a nation of slaves, must have been peculiarly offensive to him.

obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord ; neither will I let Israel go."

Aaron said again, "The Lord our God hath sent us : let us go, I pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness to do sacrifice unto Him, lest He destroy us with pestilence, or with the sword."

But Pharaoh said, "Why do ye keep the people from their tasks? Keep them not, and go ye to your own work."

Also he said to the taskmasters whom he had set over the people in the brick-fields, "Ye shall no more give the people straw for their brick-making : let them go and gather straw for themselves. But ye shall exact from them the same work as before ; ye shall not diminish it at all : for they are idle, and therefore it is that they say, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let more work be laid upon them, that they may not heed idle words any more."

So the taskmasters said to the people, "Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Get ye therefore straw for yourselves where ye can ; but your tasks shall be the same as before."

Then the people went about the field seeking stubble¹ for lack of straw, where they could find it.

Now there was set over each company of brick-makers an officer, to whom the taskmasters looked that the due quantity of bricks should be delivered day by day ; and when the number was not delivered they were beaten² by the taskmasters. Then the officers of

¹ Brick chambers, probably built by the Israelites, have been found in which the lower courses of the bricks are made with straw (used to make the Nile mud cohere the better), the middle with reeds, etc. (the stubble of the text), and the upper with nothing but clay or mud.

² Probably with something like the bastinado, still, or until quite recently, used in Egypt to exact from the peasantry the taxes or forced labour due to the government.

the Israelites cried to Pharaoh, saying, "Why dealest thou thus with thy servants? We are bidden to make bricks, but there is no straw given us; and we are beaten, but the fault is in thine own people."

But Pharaoh answered them, "Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord our God. Look now, I will not give you straw, but I will exact the bricks as before."

And when the officers heard these words they were greatly troubled, so that they reproached Moses and Aaron, saying to them, "The Lord look upon you, and judge you: ye have made us hateful to Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hands to slay us."

Then Moses cried to the Lord, and said, "Why hast Thou treated Thy people so ill? why hast Thou sent me to them? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered them at all."

Then the Lord said again unto Moses, "Say again to this people, Verily I will deliver you out of bondage, and will bring you into the land which I promised to your fathers; for I am the Lord."

So Moses went again to the people, and spake to them these words; but they hearkened not unto him for anguish of heart and cruel bondage.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, and bid him send My people out of his land."

Moses answered, "My own people will not hearken unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hearken?"

But God said, "I have made thee as a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron shall be thy prophet."

So the two went in to Pharaoh, and spake as before. And when Pharaoh asked for a sign, Aaron threw down his rod upon the ground before Pharaoh, and it became a serpent.

But Pharaoh called the wise men and magicians of Egypt, and they did the same. They cast down every man his rod, and each rod became a serpent ;¹ but Aaron's rod swallowed up all their rods.

The next day when Pharaoh came down to the river, as was his wont, for the Egyptians honoured their



MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH.

river greatly, because it nourished their whole land, Moses and Aaron met him, and said to him, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let My people go, that they may serve Me." And when Pharaoh would not hearken to them, then Aaron took the rod and lifted it

¹ Various explanations are given. One is that the serpents were trained to become stiff, and were held as rods till they were let run down upon the ground. Another is that the serpents were produced by legerdemain, after the fashion of modern conjurors. The words of the writer of Exodus are, "They did the same by their enchantments."

up, and smote the water of the river therewith in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants. And all the waters of the river were turned to blood, and the fish that were therein died. In the ponds also and the canals, and in the vessels of wood and stone, the water was turned in like manner, so that throughout the land of Egypt there was blood for water. The Egyptians digged by the river for water, for they loathed to drink of the river. Nevertheless, because the magicians did the same with their enchantments, Pharaoh hardened his heart, and would not let the people of Israel go. This was the first plague, and it endured for seven days.

After this Aaron stretched forth his hand over the river, and there came up out of it a great plague of frogs, and covered the whole land of Egypt, coming even into the houses. Pharaoh was troubled thereat, and though the magicians did the same with their enchantments, he said to Moses and Aaron, "Entreat the Lord for me, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the children of Israel go, that they may do sacrifice unto Him." Moses answered, "When shall I entreat the Lord to take them away?" And Pharaoh said, "To-morrow." And so it was; for on the morrow the frogs died out of the houses, and out of the fields. And the people gathered them in great heaps, so that the whole land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart, and would not let the people go. This was the second plague.¹

¹ Canon Rawlinson quotes from the Commentary of Eustathius on Homer a curiously similar story: "In Pæonia and Dardania there appeared once such a multitude of frogs that they filled the houses and the streets. Therefore, as killing them or shutting the doors was of no avail, as even the vessels were full of them, the water infested, and all food uneatable; as they could scarcely set their foot upon the ground without

The third plague was a plague of lice. Aaron stretched forth his rod, and smote the dust of the land, that it became lice in man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt. And when the magicians sought to do the same with their enchantments, they could not ; and they said to Pharaoh, " This is the finger of God ; " but he would not hearken unto them.¹

Therefore there was sent upon him a fourth plague, even swarms of flies. Throughout the land were the flies found, and in the houses of the Egyptians. The whole land was devoured by them. But in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel dwelt, they were not found. When Pharaoh saw that this was so, he sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, " Ye shall offer sacrifice to the Lord your God, if ye will ; but ye must offer it within the borders of the land." But they said, " Shall we sacrifice the beasts that the Egyptians count to be holy before their eyes? Will they not stone us?" Then Pharaoh said, " Ye shall go into the wilderness to do sacrifice. Only go not very far away ; and entreat for me."

So they entreated the Lord for Pharaoh, and the plague of the flies ceased. But when it had ceased, Pharaoh hardened his heart again.

After this there came a grievous sickness upon all the beasts, upon the horses, and the asses, the camels, the oxen, and the sheep. Throughout all the land of Egypt it prevailed, but not in the land of Goshen, for

treading on heaps of them, and as they were greatly vexed by the smell of the great numbers which died, they fled from that region altogether."

¹ The Egyptians, a scrupulously clean people, must have been greatly troubled by this infliction. Herodotus in his description of the country and people in the second book of his *Histories* tells us that the priests are accustomed every other day to shave their entire bodies, so that no louse or other impure creature may adhere to them when they are engaged in serving the gods.

of the cattle of the Israelites there died not one. This was the fifth plague. But when Pharaoh still hardened his heart, Moses took ashes of the furnace, and standing before Pharaoh sprinkled it towards heaven. And the dust became a boil breaking forth on man and beast. The magicians could not stand before Moses by reason of the boils ; for they were upon the magicians as upon all the Egyptians. This was the sixth plague.

But when Pharaoh still hardened his heart and would not let the people of Israel go, the Lord said to Moses, " Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For if thou wilt not, then will I send all My plagues upon thee, and upon thy people, that thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth. Dost thou still exalt thyself against Me? Behold, to-morrow at this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous rain, such as hath not been in Egypt from the foundation thereof until now. Send therefore and fetch all that thou hast out of the fields, for all men and beasts that shall be found to-morrow in the fields shall die of the hail."

Then he that feared the Lord among Pharaoh's servants fetched his slaves and his cattle out of the field, but he that regarded Him not, left them there.

On the morrow at the time appointed Moses stretched forth his rod to heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail on the land. There was hail, and lightning mingled with it, and the lightning ran along the ground. Very grievous was the hail, such as there had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. Every man and every beast that was in the field it slew ; every herb of the field it smote, and it brake every tree. The flax also and the barley it destroyed, for the

barley was in the ear, and the seed-vessels were formed in the flax. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten, for they were not yet grown up. So it was throughout the land of Egypt; but in the land of Goshen only there was no hail. This was the seventh plague. When Pharaoh saw what had befallen, he sent for Moses and Aaron, and said, "I have sinned. The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord for me that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer."

Moses said, "As soon as I shall have gone out of the city I will stretch out my hands unto the Lord, and the thunder shall cease, and there shall be no more hail, that thou mayest know that the earth is the Lord's. Nevertheless I know that thou and thy servants will not yet fear the Lord."

So when he had gone forth out of the city Moses stretched out his hands unto the Lord, and the plague ceased. And when Pharaoh saw that it had ceased, he hardened his heart, and would not let the people go.

Then Moses and Aaron went by the word of the Lord into the presence of Pharaoh, and said unto him, "Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me? let My people go, that they may serve Me. Else, if thou refuse to let My people go, to-morrow I will bring the locusts into all thy coasts. They shall devour all that has escaped from the hail; and they shall fill thy house and the houses of all the Egyptians. Such locusts have not thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day."

And when he had so spoken he turned himself, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.

Then Pharaoh's counsellors said to him, "How long shall this man be a trouble to us? let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that the land of Egypt is destroyed?"

So Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "Go, if ye will, and serve the Lord. But who are they that are to go?"

Moses said, "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds; for we must keep a feast unto the Lord."

Then Pharaoh said, "Go ye that are men, for that was the thing that ye did desire. But your little ones I will not suffer to go with you." For he would have kept their little ones, as a pledge that they should come back. And Moses and Aaron were driven from Pharaoh's presence. Then Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord caused an east wind to blow all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over the land of Egypt, and remained in all the coasts of Egypt; very grievous were they. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; and there remained not any green thing among the trees, or among that which grew in the fields, throughout all the land of Egypt.¹

¹ Compare the description of a plague of locusts given by the prophet Joel (ii. 2, 3), "A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains. . . . A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them." Dr. Pusey (*Minor Prophets*) quotes an account by a traveller who was an eye-witness of a plague of locusts in Novogorod in 1646: "The ground was all covered, and the earth was so full of them that I could not eat in my chamber without a candle, all

Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, "I have sinned against the Lord God, and against you. Forgive, I pray you, my sin this once only, and entreat the Lord your God, that He may take away this death only."

Then Moses entreated the Lord; and the Lord caused a mighty west wind to blow, and it carried away all the locusts from the land of Egypt, so that there was not one of them left. So the eighth plague ceased from the land. But Pharaoh still hardened his heart.

After this Moses stretched forth his hand towards heaven, by the word of the Lord, and there was thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days. For three days no man could see another, nor rise from his place. But the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. The thick darkness was the ninth plague.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and said, "Go ye, serve the Lord, and let your little ones go with you: only let your flocks and herds remain behind."

Moses made answer, "Our cattle must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind: for we must take of them to sacrifice unto the Lord our God; and we know not what we must sacrifice until we shall come thither."

Then Pharaoh said, "Get thee away, and take heed that thou see my face no more; for in the day that thou seest my face thou shalt surely die."

the houses being full of them, even the stables, barns, chambers, garrets, and cellars. I caused cannon-powder and sulphur to be burnt to expel them, but all to no purpose; for when the door was opened, an infinite number came in, and the others went fluttering about; and it was a troublesome thing when a man went abroad to be hit on the face by these creatures—on the eyes, nose, or cheeks—so that there was no opening one's mouth, but some would get in. Yet all this was nothing; for when we were to eat they gave us no respite; and when we went to cut a piece of meat, we cut a locust with it; and when a man opened his mouth to put in a morsel, he was sure to chew one of them."

And Moses said, "Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more : but hearken yet once more unto me, for thus saith the Lord, About midnight I will go out into the land of Egypt ; and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, to the first-born of the woman that sitteth to grind the mill. And there shall be a great cry throughout the land of Egypt, such as never hath been heard in it before." And when he had so spoken he went out from the presence of Pharaoh in great wrath.

After these things Moses spake by the word of the Lord to the children of Israel, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, This month shall be the first month¹ in the year to you. On the tenth day every head of a house shall take a lamb for his household, or, if the household be too small, then two shall join together. These ye shall keep ready for killing till the fourteenth day. And on the evening of the fourteenth day ye shall kill them, and sprinkle the blood on the two side-posts and on the lintels of the doors of your houses. And the flesh ye shall eat roasted with fire ; with unleavened bread shall ye eat it, and bitter herbs, having your loins girded for a journey, and with your staves in your hands : ye shall eat in haste.² On the night of that same fourteenth day the angel of the Lord shall pass through the land of Egypt, and shall smite all the first-born both of man and beast. But when he seeth the blood sprinkled on the door-posts and the lintel, he shall PASS OVER that house. This feast shall ye keep for ever in this fashion, and ye shall call it the Lord's PASSOVER."

¹ It was the month *Nisan*, roughly corresponding to our April.

² Tacitus in his account of the Jews (*Hist.* v. 4) relates that they still eat bread without leaven at the feast that commemorates their departure from Egypt, as a memorial of the harvests that they hastily gathered.

Moses also bade the Hebrews borrow jewels of gold and silver from the Egyptians, their neighbours ; and God so inclined the hearts of the Egyptians that they gave them without stint or grudging.¹

At midnight, on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, the angel of death passed through the land and



THE PASSOVER.

smote all the first-born of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh, the prince who should have reigned in his stead, to the first-born of the captive in the dungeon. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his

¹ It is not difficult to defend the morality of the transaction. The Hebrews, invited into the land originally as guests, had been wrongfully enslaved. The Egyptians must have been largely indebted to them for forced and unpaid labour, and this was a rough-and-ready method, the only one, it must be remembered, practical under the circumstances, of redressing the balance.

servants; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house in which there was not one dead.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron before it was light, and said, "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people. Go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone: but bless me before you go."

And the Egyptians were urgent with them that they should go in haste; for they said, "We are all dead men."

So the children of Israel went forth out of the land of Egypt. At dawn on the fifteenth day they went forth, each man having his kneading-trough with the unleavened dough bound with his clothes upon his shoulder. Six hundred thousand men¹ were there in all.

Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for so Joseph had commanded his brethren when he lay dying.

Now Moses, by command of the Lord, did not lead the people by the nearest road, that is by the country of the Philistines into the land of Canaan, lest they should repent of their going when they saw the Philistines, for the Philistines were a warlike nation. Their first halting place was at Succoth, and the second at Etham.² But from Etham they turned again to the southward, the Lord going before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, to guide them on their

¹ The number has been questioned; and indeed the difficulty of imagining how so vast a multitude could have found subsistence, not to speak of other difficulties, is very great. It must be remembered that the six hundred thousand men would imply a total of two millions and more. But there are instances on record of migrations scarcely less wonderful. Four hundred thousand Tartars made their way out of Russia to the borders of China, as described in a very picturesque paper by De Quincey.

² Succoth, or the "Booths," would seem to have been somewhere near the Bitter Lakes. We may conjecture that it was a wooded region, where the emigrants could make shelter for themselves out of the branches of trees.

way. And they pitched their camp between Migdol and the sea. Before them were the mountains and the Red Sea on the one hand, and the wilderness on the other.

Now Pharaoh and the Egyptians had repented them that they had let the Hebrews go from serving them. And when the king heard that they had encamped between Migdol and the sea, he said to his counsellors, "They are entangled in the land; they are shut in between the wilderness and the sea." Thereupon he pursued after them, he and all his chariots, and all his host.

But when the children of Israel saw the army of the Egyptians, they were sore afraid; they said to Moses, "Were there no graves in Egypt, that thou hast taken us away to die in the wilderness? Did we not say to thee, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die here in the wilderness."

Moses said unto the people, "Fear ye not; stand still and see the salvation which the Lord shall show you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall stand still."

That night the pillar of the cloud removed from before the host of the children of Israel, and stood behind them. Between the camp of the Hebrews and the camp of the Egyptians it stood; to the Egyptians it was a cloud of darkness, but to the Hebrews it gave light. So the two came not together all the night.

And Moses stretched forth his hand across the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back all that night by a strong east wind, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. The children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and

the waters were a wall to them on the right hand and on the left.¹

When the Egyptians saw how that the children of



THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL.

Israel went forward, then they pursued after them, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, even all

¹ Many attempts have been made to explain the passage of the Red Sea by the children of Israel. Canon Rawlinson, to whom I am largely indebted in this Story of Moses, writes : " All at once an east, or south-east, wind arose, and drove the upper water of the shallow bay that lay before him towards the north-west, while probably a strong ebb-tide set in at the same time, and drew the lower water southwards, so that the bed of the sea was for a considerable space laid bare." And he adds in a note : " The people of Memphis had a tradition to this effect. They said that Moses, being well acquainted with the district, *watched the ebb of the tide*, and so led the people across the dry bed of the sea." It is quite impossible to remove all the supernatural incidents from the story of the Exodus. At the same time it is wise, and, it may be added, reverent, not to regard as miraculous whatever may be fairly explained by natural causes.

Pharaoh's horses and chariots. But the wheels of the chariots sank into the sand of the sea, so that they could not be driven forward. Also the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and troubled them. So that they said, "Let us flee from before the face of Israel ; for the Lord fighteth against us."

But as they turned to flee the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch forth thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come up again upon the Egyptians." So Moses stretched forth his hand, and the waters returned, and covered the chariots of Pharaoh, and all his host. There was not one of them left. Thus did the children of Israel come forth out of the land of Egypt, the Lord helping them and saving them.

III.—In the Wilderness

When the children of Israel saw the great work that the Lord had done for them, they believed in Him and in His servant Moses. And they sang a song of thanksgiving unto the Lord, as Moses taught them ; and Miriam, the prophetess, his sister, with the women of Israel, praised the Lord with timbrels and dances. After this Moses led Israel into the wilderness of Shur. Three days did they march through the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to water, behold it was bitter.¹ Therefore they called the name of that place "Marah," for Marah signifieth "bitterness" ; and they said to Moses, "What shall we drink ?" Then the Lord showed unto Moses a tree, which when he had cast

¹ i.e. Brackish.

into the waters, they were made sweet. From Marah they journeyed to Elim, where there were twelve wells and seventy palm-trees ; and they encamped there by the waters. From Elim they came to the wilderness of Sin, going eastward and southward towards Mount Sinai ; and it was now a full month since they had come forth from the land of Egypt, for they came to Sin on the fifteenth day of the second month.

Then all the people murmured against Moses and Aaron, for the provision that they had brought forth out of Egypt failed them, and the land was barren. And they said, "Would to God that we had died in Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and we had bread in plenty ; for ye have brought us forth into the wilderness, to kill this whole assembly in the wilderness."

Then Moses said, by the word of the Lord, "The Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full ; for your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord."

So it came to pass that in the evening there came up great flocks of quails, and covered the camp ; and in the morning, when the dew was dried up, there lay on the earth a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost on the ground. And the children of Israel called it manna,¹ for they said, "This is a gift." And Moses said, "Let every man gather for his household as much as he shall need ; but let no man leave aught against the next day." And when some did so, it became corrupt. But on the sixth day there was a double portion. And when the rulers of the congregation told Moses, he answered, "This is so because to-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath. Let every man lay up what is left till the morning." And now that which they laid

¹ *Man hu* in the Hebrew, words which may mean what is given in the text.

up was not corrupted. And when some went out to gather it on the Sabbath, they found none.

Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot, and lay in it an omer¹ of manna, to be kept for the generations to come, that they may know how the Lord did feed His people in the wilderness."

From the wilderness of Sin the people journeyed to Rephidim; and there was no water for them to drink. And when they murmured against Moses, saying, "Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt to kill us, and our children, and our cattle, with thirst?" Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, "What shall I do unto this people? for they are almost ready to stone me." Then the Lord said, "Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so; and he called the name of that place Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?"

Now there dwelt in the land of Sinai two tribes, that is to say the Kenites, who were of the kindred of Abraham, and the Amalekites.² These last were greatly displeased that a strange people should come into their land with many flocks and herds, eating up the pasture that should have been theirs. Therefore they followed the host and smote the hindmost of them, even all that were feeble and weary and halted on the way. Then Moses said to Hoshea, the son of Nun (that was afterwards called Joshua), "Choose out men,

¹ An *omer* was a measure about equivalent to three quarts.

² An Amalek is mentioned among the sons of Esau. On the other hand, the Amalekites appear to be spoken of (Gen. xiv. 7) as existing in Abraham's time. Places and people are, however, sometimes spoken of under names which did not belong to them till long afterwards. The offence of the Amalekites in attacking Israel seems to have been considered very grievous, for it is mentioned as the reason for the extermination enjoined upon Saul (1 Sam. xv. 2).

and go out, fight with Amalek ; and I will stand on the hill with the rod of God in my hand." And it came to pass that when he held up the rod, Israel prevailed, and when he let it down, Amalek prevailed. Therefore Aaron and Hur held up his hands on either side, till the going down of the sun. So Hoshea smote Amalek with the edge of the sword.



MOSES OVERLOOKING THE BATTLE.

And Moses built an altar there, and called it Jehovah-nissi, *i.e.* the Lord is my banner.

While the people abode yet by Mount Horeb, Jethro, Moses' brother-in-law, came to him, bringing with him Zipporah and her two sons ; for these Moses had sent back out of the land of Egypt. And Moses went out to meet him and did obeisance to him, and kissed him, and brought him into his tent. And Moses told him

of all the deliverance which the Lord had wrought for Israel, which things Jethro greatly rejoiced to hear. And Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods." And he offered a burnt-offering unto the Lord ; and Aaron and all the elders of Israel sat down with him at the sacred feast.

On the morrow Moses sat to judge the people, as was his wont, and the people brought their matters before him from morning to night. When Jethro saw this, he said, "Sittest thou thus alone to judge the people?" Moses answered, "The people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a matter they come unto me, and I judge between them." Then Jethro said, "This thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt wear out thyself and the people also. The thing is too heavy for thee. Thou canst not do it alone. Harken now to my counsel. Stand thou to bring the causes of the people before God ; but provide out of the people able men such as fear God, and are men of truth and hate covetousness ; and make them rulers of thousands and hundreds and fifties and tens. Let them judge the people at all seasons. And every great matter they shall bring to thee ; but every small matter they shall judge themselves. Thus shalt thou endure, and the people shall be content, having their matters judged quickly."

And Moses did so. After this Jethro went his way to his own land.

On the fifteenth day of the third month the people came to Sinai, and encamped before the mountain. On the third day after their coming, when they had purified themselves, they came out of their camp and stood at the foot of the mountain ; and lo ! Mount Sinai

was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire ; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. There was also heard the great voice of a trumpet ; and when Moses heard the trumpet he spake, and the Lord answered him, and called him up to the top of the mountain ; but the people stayed below, for



THE GIVING OF THE LAW.

it had been strictly charged them that they should not go up into the mountain.

Then the Lord gave to Moses the Ten Commandments and other laws that His people should observe. Afterwards Moses came down to the people, and going again into the mountain, he took with him Aaron and his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel ; that they might see the glory of the Lord.

After this Moses went up a second time into the mount, and abode there forty days. And there the Lord gave him the law.

While he tarried in the mount the people came to Aaron and said, "Make us gods who may go before us; for as for this Moses, who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him."

Then Aaron said, "Give me the golden ear-rings of your wives and your daughters."

And they gave them; and he fashioned them into the shape of a calf. Then said the people, "These are thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Then the people offered sacrifices, and feasted, and danced.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Get thee down; for this people that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves, making a golden calf and worshipping it."

Furthermore the Lord said, "This is a stiff-necked people. Let Me alone, that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation."

But Moses said, "Let not Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people. Wherefore should the Egyptians say, He brought them out of His land to destroy them? Remember also how Thou swarest by Thine own self to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that Thou wouldst give this land to their children after them."

And Moses prevailed with God.

Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain, carrying with him the two tables of the Commandments, written with the finger of God. And Hoshea, the son of Nun, was with him.

When Hoshea heard the voice of the people as they shouted, he said, "There is a noise of war in the camp."

But Moses said, "It is not the voice of them that prevail in battle, or the voice of them that are overcome. It is the voice of them that sing I do hear."

And when he came near to the camp, and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hand and brake them. He took the calf also, and when he had ground it to powder, he



THE BROKEN TABLES.

strewn the powder on the water, and made the people drink of the water. And seeing that some of the people had not ceased from their unlawful play, he stood in the gate of the camp, and cried, "Who is on the Lord's side?" And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves to him. Then he said, "Gird on every man his sword, and go throughout the camp, and slay every man his father, and companion, and neighbour." And

the Levites did so, and there were slain that day of the people three thousand men.

The next day Moses spake unto the Lord, "This people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sins—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book of the living."



MOSES BREAKS THE GOLDEN CALF.

So Moses would have given up himself for his people.¹ But the Lord said to Moses, "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. Go now, lead this people unto the place whereof I spake unto them; and Mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless I will visit their sin upon them."

¹ One cannot but compare the wonderful saying of St. Paul, that he even wished to be accursed from Christ, so that his brethren after the flesh might be saved.

After this Moses went up again into the mountain, and the Lord made other two tables of stone, and wrote on them as before. When he came down from the mountain his face shone, so that all the children of Israel feared to come near him. Therefore he put a veil on his face while he talked with them.

The people abode at Sinai for all that remained of



THE NEW TABLES.

the first year of their coming out of Egypt. On the fourteenth day of the first month of the second year they kept the passover according to the commandment. On the twentieth day of the second month of this year they departed from Sinai, and came to Paran. Here Moses said to Hobab, the son of Jethro, his brother-in-law, "We are journeying to the land which the Lord hath promised to give us: come thou with us, and we

will do thee good ; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Hobab answered, "Not so ; but I will return to my own people." But Moses said, "Leave us not ; for thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and wilt be as eyes to us. And what goodness the Lord shall do to us, that will we do to thee." Then Hobab consented to go with them.

When the people had gone a few days' journey they wearied of the manna, saying, "We remember the fish we did eat freely in Egypt ; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick ; but now there is nothing but this manna."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to this people, Sanctify yourselves, and ye shall eat flesh. Not one day, nor two days, nor five days shall ye eat it, but many days, till it be loathsome to you."

Moses said, "The people are six hundred thousand footmen, and Thou hast said that Thou wilt give them flesh to eat for a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them ? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered to satisfy them ?"

The Lord answered, "Is the Lord's hand grown short ? thou shalt see whether My word come to pass or not."

Then there went forth a wind, and brought the quails from the sea. They fell about the camp for the space of a day's journey on either side, and lay to the depth of two cubits¹ on the face of the earth. But while the flesh was yet in their mouths, the Lord smote them with a great plague, so that many died. Wherefore they called that place Kibroth-hattaavah, or the "Graves of Lust."

Now Zipporah died in the wilderness, and Moses married a woman of the daughters of Cush ; and

¹ Between three and four feet.

Miriam was wroth with him, seeing herself held in less honour than before. Aaron also joined with her in her rebellion, saying, "Hath the Lord indeed only spoken by Moses? Hath He not also spoken by us?" And Moses would have suffered it, being humble beyond all men. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron and Miriam, "Come ye into the tabernacle." And they came. Then the Lord said, "If there be a prophet among you, to him will I speak in visions and dreams. But to Moses will I speak mouth to mouth, because he is faithful: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?"

And the Lord smote Miriam with leprosy. Then Moses cried unto Him that He should heal her. Nevertheless she was shut out from the camp seven days.

Then the people marched forwards till they came to the border of the south country. Then Moses sent spies to spy out the land,¹ but when these returned with an ill report, saying that the people of the land were too strong for them, the people murmured, saying, "Let us make a captain to take us back into Egypt." Then the Lord said to Moses, "How long will this people provoke Me? how long will it be ere they believe Me, for all the signs that I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and I will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they."

But Moses interceded with the Lord for Israel; and the Lord said, "I will pardon them. Nevertheless all the men that have murmured against Me from twenty years old and upward shall die in the wilderness."

Nevertheless the people said, "We will go up and take possession of the land which the Lord promised

¹ A fuller account of the matter of the spies is given in the Story of Joshua.

to our fathers ; for we sinned when we were faint-hearted and refused to go."

But Moses said, "Go not up, lest ye be smitten ; for the Lord is not with you."

Notwithstanding they went up ; but the Amalekites that dwelt in the hills came out against them, and smote them.

After this the Lord commanded Moses that he should lead the people back by the way of the Red Sea, and he led them so. So for eight-and-thirty years they wandered in the wilderness, till all the grown men were dead. Thus were the forty years fulfilled from the day on which they came out of the land of Egypt.

Once only did the people murmur against Moses, when certain princes of the tribe of Reuben and Korah the Levite joined themselves together against him, for the princes of Reuben, because Reuben was the eldest of the sons of Jacob, sought to claim pre-eminence for their tribe, and Korah was jealous of Aaron and his son, because they only had the priesthood. As for the princes of Reuben, the earth swallowed them up alive ; and Korah and his company, even two hundred and fifty men, were consumed by a fire from the Lord when they offered incense, which thing none but the priests might lawfully do. And when the congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have slain the people of the Lord," they were smitten with a great plague. Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take fire in thy censer from the altar, and put on incense." And he did so, standing between the living and the dead, and the plague ceased.

In the first month of the fortieth year the people came to Kadesh-Barnea, where they had rested when the twelve spies were sent to spy out the land. There Miriam died, and was buried.

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While the host tarried at Kadesh the water failed, and the people murmured. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Gather the assembly together, and take the rod, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak unto the rock, and it shall give forth water."

So Moses took the rod from where it was laid up in the tabernacle, and he and Aaron gathered all the assembly together, and he said, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" And he smote the rock twice with the rod, and the water gushed out.

Thus did Moses speak unadvisedly with his lips, as if he brought the water out of the rock by his own power. And the Lord said to him and to Aaron, "Because ye have not given Me the glory, ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

From Kadesh Moses sent unto the king of Edom, saying, "Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest what hath befallen us: how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers. And when we cried unto the Lord, He heard our voice, and sent His angel before us, and brought us up out of Egypt; and now we are in Kadesh, which is in thy uttermost border. Let us, I pray thee, pass through thy country. We will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards; we will not drink of the water of the wells; we will go by the king's highway; we will not turn to the right hand or to the left."

But the king of Edom said, "Thou shalt not pass through my land. If thou do I will come out against thee with the sword."

So they turned to go another way. But while they tarried at Kadesh, Arad the Canaanite, that was king

of the south,¹ came against them, and took some of them prisoners. But afterwards they prevailed over him, and destroyed all his cities.

After this the people journeyed to Mount Hor. There it was ordered that Aaron should die. So he went up to the top of the mountain in the sight of all the people, and Moses, and Eleazar, Aaron's son, went with him. And Moses took his priestly garments from Aaron, and put them on Eleazar; and Aaron died on the top of Mount Hor, and was buried.

Then Aaron being dead, the people journeyed forward, going round the border of Edom, because they were not suffered to go through. And they were discouraged because there were many enemies, and the journey was long, and food and water scarce. And when they murmured, they suffered from a plague of fiery serpents.

Then Moses, by command of the Lord, made the image of one of the serpents in brass, and put it on a pole, and lifted it up in the sight of all the people. And it came to pass, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

After this the people came in their journeyings to the river of Arnon, which was the border between the Amorites and the land of Moab. Thence they sent to Sihon, king of the Amorites, asking him that he would suffer them to pass through his land, even as they had sent to the king of Edom. But Sihon refused to let them pass, and came out against them with a great host, and fought against them at Jahaz. Then the men of Israel fell upon his host, pressing him hard with their slingers and their archers. King Sihon himself was slain, and his army was scattered over the whole

¹ "Probably the tract about the modern Tel Arad, which is between Beersheba and the southern end of the Dead Sea" (Rawlinson).

country. Some fled into the cities, but the greater part perished, being overtaken and surrounded in the watercourse, whither they had gone down to drink, being weary with their flight.

So Israel prevailed over Sihon, king of the Amorites. Then they fought against another prince of the Amorites, Og, who was king of Bashan, and had his borders from Jabbok in the south to Hermon in the north. He pitched his camp at Edrei; and there the children of Israel fell upon him, and though he and many of his people were of the race of the giants, they destroyed him utterly.¹

Last of all they fought with the Midianites. One thousand out of every tribe did Moses send against them, and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, for their captain. They fought against them, and conquered them, slaying five of their kings, and with them Balaam² the prophet, whom Balak, king of Moab, had brought from the east to curse Israel.

When the land that was eastward of Jordan was thus conquered, the two tribes of Gad and Reuben came to Moses and said, "We have many flocks and herds, and this is a good land for pasture. Give us therefore our portion here." But Moses answered, "Shall your brethren go to war and ye sit here?" They said, "Not so; we will build here sheepfolds for our flocks, and cities for our little ones; but we ourselves will go over ready armed before the children of Israel. We

¹ It has been thought that the Israelites were assisted in this war by the Ammonites. We find that the "bedstead," *i.e.* the sarcophagus of Og, which may be considered to have been one of the trophies of the war, was afterwards kept at "Rabbath of the children of Ammon." It is described as having been of gigantic size, "nine cubits long" (13 feet 4 inches). Jewish legend gave a marvellous account of Og's stature.

² Balaam seems to have taken service with the rulers of Midian, and to have suggested the temptation to join in the licentious worship of Baal (Num. xxv.)

will not return into our houses, before they shall have inherited every man his inheritance." Then Moses said, "If ye will do this thing, then shall ye return and possess the land, and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel. But if ye will not do so, then ye will



MOSES ON PISGAH.

have sinned against the Lord, and be sure that your sin will find you out."

So the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had the land that was eastward of Jordan to be their inheritance ; and half the tribe of Manasseh with them.

Then came the time when Moses must die. So he called to him Joshua, the son of Nun,¹ who had been appointed to lead the people in his stead, and gave him his charge. This done, he blessed all the people, tribe

¹ The Hoshea mentioned before.

by tribe. And when he had ended his blessing, he went up from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. There the Lord showed him the land which He had promised to give to Israel ; for He had said to him, "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither."

So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab ; over against Beth-peor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.¹

¹ Moses' sight of the country is described in Deut. xxxiv. 1-3 in these words : "And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea ; and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar." Professor Rawlinson thus explains it : "From the highest peak of Nebo, which seems to have borne the name of Pisgah, the natural eye, unhelped, would have ranged over the sylvan scenes of Gilead and Bashan, over the Ghor or Jordan valley from end to end, over the Dead Sea and the hill country of the south beyond, over the Judean capital, and over the mountains of Ephraim and Manasseh,—would have had glimpses of the fertile valleys which nestle among the Palestinian hills, and have caught sight of ancient cities, crowning many a rocky eminence. Naphtali, if not seen, would have been suggested by the snowy peak of Hermon, towering aloft in the far northern sky ; and even the 'utmost sea,' though far beyond bodily ken, being shut out by the Judean hills, would have been felt as present beyond them at no great distance to the west."

THE STORY OF JOSHUA

I

AMONG the children of Israel that came out of Egypt there was a certain Hoshea, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. Moses had seen that he was valiant and skilful, and when the Amalekites came out against Israel at Rephidim, to slay them on their journey to Sinai, Moses appointed him to be captain of the host. So he went and defeated the Amalekites in a great battle ; and after that Moses called him by the name of Jehoshua or Joshua, which is, being interpreted, "The Lord's Salvation." And when Moses went up into the mountain of Sinai to receive the law from God, Joshua went with Aaron and the elders so far as it was lawful for them to go ; and while he was in the mount Joshua waited for him. From the day when Moses came down from the mount Joshua became his minister, attending on him continually, and dwelling in his tent. Also he was one of the seventy judges whom Moses appointed to do justice among the people. Very zealous was he for the honour of his chief ; for when two of the seventy, Eldad and Medad by name, tarried in the camp, and prophesied there (but the rest prophesied in the tabernacle), he said, "My lord Moses, forbid them." But Moses answered, "Enviest thou for my sake ?

Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them ! ”

In the second year after the departure of Israel from the land of Egypt, the people approached to the borders of the land which the Lord had promised to their fathers to give them ; and they pitched their camp in the wilderness of Paran. Then Moses chose twelve men, one out of each tribe, that they might go as spies and see the land what it was, and the people that dwelt therein, whether they were strong or weak, few or many, and whether they dwelt in tents or in strongholds. “ Be of good courage,” he said to them, “ and bring of the fruit of the land.” And the time at which the men were sent was the time of the first ripe grapes. Joshua was chosen from the tribe of Ephraim, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, from the tribe of Judah. So these twelve men went throughout the land from the wilderness of the south to Mount Lebanon in the north. And when they came to the brook Eshcol (which is near to Hebron) they cut down one of the clusters of grapes, and carried it upon a staff between two. Also they brought figs and pomegranates from the land. The time which they spent upon their journey was forty days. And when they came back to the place whence they had come, and showed to the people the fruits which they had brought, thus they said to Moses, “ We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey ; and this is the fruit of it. But the people that dwell in the land are strong, great and mighty nations—the Amalekites in the south, and the Amorites in the mountains, and the Canaanites by the sea¹ and by the banks of Jordan, and the children of Anak that are giants. We are but grasshoppers in their sight and in

¹ The inland sea afterwards called the Sea of Galilee.

our own." But Caleb said, "Let us go up at once and possess the land ; for we are well able to overcome the people that inhabit it." Joshua also said, "Let us go up." But the people believed the ten spies rather than Caleb and Joshua, and they wept, saying, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt or in the wilderness !" And they murmured against Moses and Aaron, and said to one another, "Let us make us a captain that he may lead us back into the land of Egypt." But Caleb and Joshua ran among them with their clothes rent, and cried, "The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord have a favour for us, He will bring us into it ; and as for the people that dwell therein, their strength is gone from them, for the Lord is with us : therefore fear them not." But the people ran upon them, and would have stoned them with stones had they not feared the glory of the Lord, for the glory appeared at that time above the tabernacle. Then the Lord was wroth with the people, and said that all that murmured, from twenty years old and upward, should perish in the wilderness ; and the ten spies that gave the evil report died of the plague. Only Caleb and Joshua were left alive.

But when forty years were accomplished from the coming out of Egypt, the children of Israel approached the Promised Land, coming to it from the east. First they subdued the country that is eastward of Jordan, the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. Then came the time when Moses must die, for the Lord had said to him, "Thou shalt see the land with thine eyes, but thou shalt not enter it. Thou shalt not go over Jordan." But before he died he chose Joshua to be the leader of the people after him, for so the Lord commanded him. And he gave him a

charge, and said, "Be strong and of a good courage, for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which the Lord swore unto them, and the Lord shall be with thee." Then Moses went up to the top of Pisgah, that he might see the land and die. And Joshua and Phinehas the priest went with him on his



THE APPOINTMENT OF JOSHUA.

way; but they saw him not when he died, nor did they know where he was buried, save that he was buried in the valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor.

When Moses was dead, the Lord said to Joshua, "Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give them. Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon have I given you, from Lebanon unto the great river, the

river Euphrates, and westward to the great sea.¹ Be strong and of a good courage ; be not afraid, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Now the people had pitched their camp in the plains of Moab, at Abel-Shittim (the plain of the acacia-trees), near to the place where Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. And they looked across the river to the great city of Jericho. Then Joshua commanded the chief men of the tribes that they should bid the people make provision of food, for that within three days they should go over Jordan. Also, he spake to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—for these had had their portion given to them on the eastern side of Jordan—and said, "Ye shall leave your wives, and your children, and your cattle, on this side of Jordan ; but ye yourselves shall go up armed before your brethren, and help them until the Lord shall have given your brethren rest as He hath given it to you." And they said, "All that thou commandest us, we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go."

After this Joshua sent from the camp two men to spy out the city of Jericho. And the men entered into the city, and lodged in the house of a woman that was called Rahab. But they were seen coming in, and it was told the king of Jericho, "Behold, there came in men of the children of Israel to-night to search out the country." And the king sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring forth the men that are lodging in thy house, for they are come to search out all the country." Rahab said to the king's messengers, "It is true that there came men unto me, but I knew not whence they were. And at the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, they departed ; but whither they went, I know not. Pursue after them quickly, for ye shall overtake

¹ The Mediterranean.

them." But she had brought the men up to the roof, and hidden them under the stalks of flax, which she had laid there to dry. As for the king's messengers, they pursued after the spies along the road that led to the fords of Jordan ; and the gate of the city was shut after them.

But before the spies lay down to sleep Rahab came up to them upon the roof, and said, "I know that the Lord hath given you this land, and that all the inhabitants thereof are afraid. We have heard how your God divided the waters of the Red Sea before you, and how you have utterly destroyed the two kings of the Amorites on the other side of Jordan ; and when we heard it our hearts melted, and there remained no courage in any of us. Now, therefore, swear by the Lord that, as I have showed you kindness, so ye will show kindness to me and to my father's house ; and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have. And give me a true token that ye will so do." Then the men answered, "We pledge our life for your life, if only ye betray not our business. And when the Lord shall have given us this land, we will deal kindly and truly with you and yours." Then she let them down by the window of her house, for her house was upon the town wall. And she said, "Fly to the mountains, lest the pursuers meet you, for they have pursued after you even to the fords of the Jordan. Hide yourselves in the mountains for three days, until the pursuers shall have returned, and then ye can go to your own people." The men answered her, "We will keep the oath which thou hast made us swear to thee. And this shall be the token. When we shall have come into the land, bind this scarlet cord in the window from which thou lettest us down. Bring also thy father, and thy mother,

and thy brethren, and thy sisters, and all thy father's household into the house. If any go out into the street, his blood shall be on his own head if he perish ; but whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our heads, if any man do him harm. But if thou makest known our business we are quit of this our oath." And she said, "According unto your words, so be it." And she bound the scarlet line in the window of her house. But the men fled to the mountain, and hid themselves there three days, and after that they returned to Joshua to the camp, and said, "Jericho is a strong city, but the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for the inhabitants faint for fear because of us."

After this the host of the Israelites marched from Shittim to Jordan. Now at this season of the year Jordan is swollen by the melting of the snows of Lebanon, and overflows all his banks.¹ And the people encamped by Jordan that night. And Joshua sent officers throughout the host, who commanded the people in these words : "When ye see the priests take up the ark of the covenant, follow it ; but leave a space of a thousand yards' measure between you and it ; come not nearer to it, that ye may know the way that ye must go, for such a way ye have not gone before." And Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

When the morrow was come, and the day was the tenth of Nisan,² Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the

¹ By the "banks" is meant the ordinary channel of the river. There is a wider channel, known by a name which signifies the "depression," which is filled at such times. But the adjacent country is never flooded by the river, which is almost singular among rivers in not having a valley in the ordinary sense of that term.

² About equivalent to the latter end of March and the first part of April in our calendar.

ark and pass over before the people." Then the priests took up the ark, and went before ; and all the people left their tents and followed them, leaving a space as had been commanded. And when they that bore the ark came to Jordan, and their feet were dipped in the brim of the waters, then the waters that came from above stood, rising up in a heap, so that the channel



THE PASSAGE OF JORDAN.

was dried from the city of Adam downwards to Jericho,¹ and the waters below, towards the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off. So all the people crossed the river dry-shod, the priests that bore the ark standing in the middle of the river till all the people had crossed over.

First went the men of Reuben and of Gad and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, ready armed for battle,

¹ A distance of about eighteen miles.

about forty thousand soldiers; and after them the rest of the multitude. And when they had all passed over, Joshua commanded the priests, saying, "Come up out of Jordan." And it came to pass when they had come up out of the river, as soon as their feet touched the dry land, the waters of Jordan returned to their places, and flowed over all their banks as they had done before.

Of this crossing there were set up, as Joshua commanded, according to the word of the Lord, two memorials. The first was in this manner: Twelve men, one out of each tribe, took up great stones out of Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm, and set them up on the other bank, in the place where the host was to lodge that night. And the second memorial was this: There were set up in like manner twelve stones in the midst of the river in the place where the priests had stood with the ark.

That night the people pitched their camp in the plain that was called Gilgal.¹ This plain was distant five miles from Jordan and two miles eastward from Jericho. Here they fortified a camp, and here on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan they kept the Feast of Passover to the Lord. And this was the second Passover that Israel kept after they came out of the land of Egypt. Once had they kept it when they were encamped under Mount Sinai, but not again during the eight-and-thirty years of their wanderings in the wilderness. And on the morrow after the Passover the people ate unleavened bread of the old corn of the land. From that day they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan, and the manna ceased.

And Joshua went up to see the city of Jericho, and to devise how it might be taken. And as he looked he had a vision—a man standing over against him with a

¹ The word Gilgal is said to mean "freedom."

drawn sword in his hand. Then Joshua went unto him, and said, "Art thou for us or against us?" And the man answered, "Nay, but as captain of the Lord's host am I come." Then Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said, "What saith my Lord unto his servant?" And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for



THE WALLS OF JERICO.

the place whereon thou standest is holy." And Joshua did so. Then the angel told Joshua how he should take the city of Jericho. The manner of taking it was this.

On the first day of the week the whole host of Israel, armed and equipped for battle, marched round the wall. After the host came seven priests blowing on rams' horns, and after these, again, the ark, carried on the shoulders of priests. Behind the ark came a

company from the tribe of Dan, for the men of Dan furnished always the rear-guard of the army. This was done day after day for six days. No shouting was there or cry of battle. Only the priests blew continually with the trumpets. And on the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, the host made this compass of the walls seven times. Six times they made it in silence, but the seventh time, when it was now the time of sunset and the Sabbath was near to its end, all the people shouted together, and the wall fell down, so that the army could go up into the city without hindrance.

Thus Jericho was taken, and all that was in it was destroyed, save only the vessels of gold and silver and brass and iron. These were brought into the treasury of the Lord. And Joshua laid a curse upon any that should build the city again; and the curse was this: that his eldest son should die when he laid the foundation, and his youngest when he set up the gates, and so finished the work.¹ But when Jericho and its people were utterly destroyed, Rahab and her household were saved, as the spies whom she saved from death had sworn unto her. This Rahab was married afterwards to Salmon, chief prince of the tribe of Judah. To him she bare a son Boaz, and Boaz was the father of Obed, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.

Now there stood some eight miles westward from Jericho the city of Ai. This city Joshua had it in his mind to take; and he sent men to spy out the place. These brought back the report that the place was small, saying to Joshua, "Make not all the people to go up. Let about two or three thousand go up and smite the place, for the inhabitants are but few." This Joshua did, but as the Israelites went up the men of Ai sallied

¹ This curse is said to have fallen on Hiel, a man of Bethel, who rebuilt Jericho when Ahab was king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah.

out upon them. And they, not looking to be attacked, turned and fled, and the men of Ai pursued them, and slew some six-and-thirty as they fled, but the rest escaped to the camp.

Great was the dismay among the people at this defeat. As for Joshua, he rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark from morning till evening. So did the elders of the people, and they put dust upon their heads. And Joshua cried to the Lord, "Why hast Thou brought this people over Jordan to deliver them into the hands of the Amorites? For when the people of the land shall hear that we have fled in the battle before the men of Ai, they will surround us and destroy us."

But the Lord answered him thus: "Get thee up; why liest thou upon thy face? Israel has sinned, for they have taken of the accursed thing."

So the next day Joshua bade all the people pass before him by their tribes and families and houses.¹ From the tribes the tribe of Judah was taken, and from the tribe of Judah the house of the Zarhites, and from the house of the Zarhites the family of Zabdi, and, last, from the family of Zabdi a certain Achan.

Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, make confession to God, and tell me now what thou hast done. Hide it not from me."

Achan answered, "I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. I saw among the spoils of Jericho a goodly mantle from Babylon, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels."²

¹ We may illustrate by the divisions of the Roman *populus*. There was a division into *Ramnes*, *Tities*, and *Luceres*. Each of these main divisions was subdivided into a number of houses (*gentes*), and each house again into families (*familia*).

² A shekel was equal to a weight of half an ounce, and the value of the silver, reckoned according to the standard value of silver and gold at

These I hid in the earth under my tent, the garment above, and the gold and silver under it."

Then Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent, and found the things as Achan had said. Then Joshua said, "Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day." And Israel stoned Achan with stones that he died; and his whole house and all his possessions were destroyed. In the place where this was done was raised a great heap of stones, and the place was called from that day the Valley of Trouble.¹

After this Joshua and the people took courage again, and went up against Ai. But first he set an ambush of five thousand men in the valley between Ai and Bethel (for Bethel is two miles to the westward of Ai), and agreed with them that he and the rest of the host should go up against the city openly from the eastward, and make a pretence of flight. "And when we flee," said he, "and the men of Ai pursue us, do ye rise up and take the city." When the king of Ai saw the host of Israel, for it had taken its place on the other side of the valley, he and his people went out against it, knowing nothing of the ambush which had been laid on the other side of his city. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before the king of Ai and his people, and fled by the way of the wilderness—that is to say, towards Jericho and Jordan. There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel; all pursued after Joshua; and the gates were open. Then Joshua

the present time, would be for the coined money (the two hundred shekels) £40, and for the bullion (the wedge of gold) £95. What the actual value at that time would have been it is impossible to calculate exactly, but it would probably be much more.

¹ The prophet Hosea (ii. 15) speaks of this valley of trouble as becoming a "door of hope," and Isaiah enumerates among the blessings of a happier age to come the fact that the valley of trouble shall become "a place for the herds to lie down in" (lxv. 10).

lifted up his spear, and pointed it towards Ai ; for this had been agreed upon for a signal. Then the men that lay in ambush rose up and entered the city, and set it on fire. And when Joshua and the host saw the smoke of the city rising up to heaven, they turned against the men of Ai. At the same time they who had taken the city came down against them from behind. So the men of Ai were taken in the midst of Israel, with the host on one side and the men of the ambush on the other. None could escape. As for the king, he was taken alive ; him Joshua hanged upon a tree. When the sun was set Joshua commanded that they should take down his carcase from the tree and cast it before the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones.

II

When the kings of the Canaanites heard how Jericho and Ai had been destroyed, they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight against Israel ; but the men of one of the cities of the Hivites, Gibeon by name, bethought them of a device by which they might save themselves. They sent ambassadors to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal ; for Joshua had led the host back to the camp. The men took old sacks upon their asses, and the bottles of skin in which they carried their wine had been torn and sown again, and their shoes were patched, and their garments old, and their bread dry and mouldy. In this plight they came to Gilgal, and said to Joshua, "We are come from a far country : now therefore make a league with us."

Joshua said to them, "Peradventure ye dwell near us ; how then shall we make a league with you ? for our

God hath forbidden us to make leagues with the people of this country. Tell us now who are ye, and whence do ye come?"

The Gibeonites answered, "Thy servants are come from a very far country because of the name of the Lord thy God. For we have heard the fame of Him and all that He did in Egypt, and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites beyond Jordan.¹ Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, Take food with you for your journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, We are your servants: therefore now make a league with us. See now this our bread that we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth is dry and mouldy; and these bottles were new, and now they are torn; and our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of our very long journey."

Then Joshua and the elders took of the food which the Gibeonites offered them in token of friendship; and Joshua made a league with them, and the elders confirmed it with an oath.

But three days afterwards they heard that they were their neighbours and dwelt among them. Then Joshua sent an army from the camp to Gibeon, which came to it on the third day. With Gibeon were confederate three cities—Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim. The people were wroth with the princes because they had made a league with these cities. But the princes said, "We have sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; therefore we may not touch them. This will we do; we will let them live, lest wrath come upon us, because of the oath which we

¹ It is to be noted that they keep up their character as strangers from a distant country by making no mention of recent events—the destruction of Jericho and Ai. Of these they could not be supposed to have heard.

sware unto them. But we will make them hewers of wood and drawers of water to all the people."

Then Joshua said to the Gibeonites, "Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you ; when in truth ye dwell among us ? Therefore ye shall be bondsmen for ever. Ye shall hew wood and draw water for us, especially for the house of our God.

The Gibeonites answered, "We were afraid. For we had heard that the Lord your God had commanded His servant Moses to destroy all the inhabitants of the land. Therefore we did this thing. But now we are in thy hand ; as it seemeth right and good unto thee to do unto us, do."

And Joshua did as he had said.¹

And when Adoni-zedek,² king of Jerusalem, heard how the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel, he was greatly troubled, for Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities. He sent therefore to the other kings that were confederate with him, that is to say, the kings of Hebron, of Jarmuth, of Lachish, and of Eglon ; and they and all their hosts went up, and encamped against Gibeon, and made war upon it.

Then the Gibeonites sent in haste to Joshua, saying, "The kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains³ are gathered together against us ; tarry not therefore to come up and save us and help us." So Joshua and

¹ The Gibeonites are spoken of throughout the history of Israel. Saul's attempt to destroy them was evidently regarded as a great crime (see 2 Sam. xv. 1-9). They appear in the genealogies of Chronicles and Ezra.

² Adoni-zedek means "Lord of Righteousness." The Melchi-zedek of Abraham's time ("King of Righteousness") was probably king of the same city. "King of Salem," the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (vii. 1) calls him.

³ As a matter of fact the attacking host came in a large measure from the lowlands. But Jerusalem, the chief of the confederacy, may be said to be among the mountains ; nor were the Gibeonites in their alarm likely to be very exact.

the bravest of the host came up from the camp at Gilgal. All night they marched, for Gibeon was distant fifteen miles from Gilgal, but the Amorites knew nothing of their coming. And when they came up from out of the valley on to the plain before Gibeon, the enemy was sore dismayed, and turned their backs, and fled.



JOSHUA AT BETH-HORON.

Some of them fled to Beth-horon, and some to their own cities. Those that took the road to Beth-horon fled with all speed down the pass that leads from Beth-horon the Upper to Beth-horon the Lower.¹ And as they were on the way, Israel following after them, a great hailstorm fell on them. They were more that died from the hail-stones than they that were slain by

¹ The distance between the two places is two miles, and the pass falls in that space about seven hundred feet.

the sword. And when Joshua saw the Amorites fleeing down the pass, he feared lest the sun should go down before Israel had made an end of destroying their enemy. Therefore he cried aloud, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." And it was so that the light failed not the children of Israel till they had avenged themselves on their enemies. All the way to Azekah did Israel pursue the Amorites; and as they pursued, it was told Joshua that the five kings had hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah. But Joshua would not suffer the people to turn aside nor to cease from their pursuit. "Roll," he said, "great stones to the door of the cave, and set a guard over it; but stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them. Suffer them not to enter into their cities, for the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hand." So the people stayed not from the pursuit; nevertheless some of the Amorites escaped into their fortified cities. After this the people returned to Joshua to the camp at Makkedah in peace. None dared to say a word against any of them.

Then said Joshua, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring the five kings out of the cave to me." So they opened the mouth of the cave, and brought them out. And he said to his captains and chief men of war, "Come near and put your feet on the necks of these men." So they came, and put their feet on the necks of the kings. And Joshua said, "Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage; for thus shall the Lord do unto all your enemies against whom ye fight." Then he commanded that the kings should be slain and hanged upon five trees. At sunset he bade his people take down the dead bodies from the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had hidden themselves, and roll a stone to the mouth of the cave.

That very day Joshua took Makkedah. And afterwards he took Libnah and Lachish and Eglon and Hebron, which was one of the cities of the children of Anak, and Debir. And when Horam, king of Gezer, came to help the men of Lachish, Joshua smote him and his people till he left him none remaining. Nevertheless the children of Israel were longer in the taking of Lachish than the other cities which they destroyed at this time, for the place was very strong. And when Joshua had subdued all the country of the south, he returned to the camp at Gilgal, and all Israel with him.

When Jabin, king of Hazor, heard these things, he sent to the kings of the north country, and of the plains that lie to the westward of Chinneroth,¹ and many others throughout the land, and called them to fight against Israel. So they assembled their armies by the waters of Merom, a very great multitude, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore for multitude. Horses and chariots also had they very many. Now of these the children of Israel had none; nor indeed had they seen them in battle, for the Canaanites of the south were wont to fight on foot. And the Lord said to Joshua, "Be not afraid of them, for I will deliver them into thine hand." And Joshua went up suddenly from Gilgal, and all the men of war with him, and he fell upon the host of Jabin as it lay by the waters of Merom, taking them unawares. The Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel. A great multitude were slain, but some escaped to Sidon, and some to Sarepta, and some to Mizpeh, which is under Hermon. All that were overtaken in the flight were slain, and all the chariots burnt with fire, and all the horses houghed; for so it had been commanded to Joshua, lest perchance the

¹ Afterwards known as the Sea or Lake of Galilee.

Israelites should seek to use them for war to their own harm.

After this Joshua returned to Hazor, and took it, and burnt it with fire. This only of all the cities of the north did Joshua burn with fire, because in those days it was the head of all the kingdoms of that region. Thus Joshua conquered the Canaanites in two great battles—the tribes of the south in the Pass of Beth-horon, and the tribes of the north by the Lake of Meron. And both these battles were fought in the year in which the children of Israel crossed the Jordan ; but the land was not subdued till seven full years had passed. Nor even then was it wholly conquered ; for the Philistines dwelt in their five cities by the sea,¹ and the Jebusites held the citadel of Jerusalem, and the kings of the northern Canaanites set up their dominion again in Hazor,² and elsewhere also the Canaanites dwelt among the children of Israel.

At the end of the seven years Joshua divided the land among the tribes ; and while he did so, Caleb the son of Jephunneh came to him, and said, "Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land ; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went with me made the heart of the people melt for fear of their report ; but I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet

¹ Gath, Gaza, Ashdod, Ekron, and Ascalon.

² The Jebusites were not dispossessed for at least three hundred years after the time of Joshua, when David took the citadel of Jerusalem. We hear of a Jabin, king of Canaan, as the oppressor of Israel in the time of Barak and Deborah (about 1200 B.C.), and as strong in the same chariots as were used in the days of Joshua.

have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as He said, these forty-and-five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. And yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, to go out and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for my brethren that went with me to spy the land spake of the children of Anak that were there, and of the strong cities in which they dwelt, and made the heart of the people to melt with their report. But if the Lord be with me, I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said." Then Joshua blessed Caleb, and gave him Hebron for an inheritance.

When the land had been divided, Joshua further appointed six cities, three on either side of Jordan, to which any man might flee who should kill another unwittingly and unawares.¹ Also to the tribe of Levi forty-eight cities were given out of the portions of the tribes.

So Joshua rested from his labours, dwelling in Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim, for this had been given to him for his inheritance; and among all the portions of the children of Israel there was none humbler than his. And when fifteen years had passed, and he knew

¹ The homicide, on reaching the city, stated his case to the elders, who received him, if he seemed to make it out satisfactorily. When the avenger of blood arrived, the accused man was put on his trial in a more formal way. If he could then show that his act was not done with premeditation, he was permitted to remain in the city. He could be lawfully slain by the avenger if he was found outside its borders. On the death of the high-priest he could return in safety to his home.

that his end was now drawing nigh, he sent for the elders of Israel to his house at Timnath, and said to them, "I am old and stricken in age. And ye have seen what the Lord hath done for you, how He has driven out the nations of the land before you, and divided the land unto you for an inheritance. Keep, therefore, all that is written in the book of the law of Moses; turn not aside from it to the right hand or to the left. Go not ye among the nations that remain; make no mention of their gods, but cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day. If ye will so do, then one of you shall chase a thousand, for it is the Lord your God that fighteth for you. But if ye go among these nations, and serve their gods, then shall they be snares and traps to you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off the good land which the Lord your God hath given you."

Also Joshua called an assembly of all Israel to Shechem. And when he had brought to their minds the great things which the Lord had done for them—how He had brought them over the Red Sea, and destroyed the Amorites that dwelt on the other side of Jordan, and caused Balaam to bless them when Balak king of Moab would have had him curse them, and how He had given them the land of the seven nations westward of Jordan—then he said to them, "Choose now whom ye will serve. Will ye serve the Lord, or will ye serve the gods whom your fathers served when they dwelt in Egypt, or the gods of the nations whom the Lord hath driven out before you? As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

All the people answered, "God forbid that we should serve other gods; we will serve the Lord who

drive out the nations from before us, for He is the Lord our God."

Joshua said, "The Lord is a jealous God; if ye forsake Him and serve other gods He will consume you, and do you hurt, as He hath done you good."

And the people answered again, "Nay; but we will serve the Lord."

Then Joshua said, "Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen the Lord to serve Him."

And the people said, "We are witnesses."

So Joshua made a covenant with the people; and he wrote these words in a book, and laid the book up with the book of the law. Also he took a great stone and set it up under an oak that was by the tabernacle of the Lord, that it might be a memorial of this covenant for ever. "This stone," he said, "shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spake unto us. It shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God."

Then Joshua let the people go to their own homes. And after this he died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah.

THE STORY OF RUTH

IN the days of the Judges, when Eli was high-priest, there was a famine in the land. So it came to pass that a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab, he and his wife and his sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion. And they came into the country of Moab and sojourned there. And Elimelech died, and Mahlon and Chilion took to themselves wives of the women of Moab ; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And after ten years Mahlon and Chilion died, and Naomi was bereaved both of her husband and sons. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return to her own country, for she had heard that God had looked upon His people and given them bread. And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt kindly with the dead. The Lord grant that each of you may find rest in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept, and said to her, "Surely we will return with thee to thy people." But Naomi answered, "Return home, my daughters. For I cannot help you, for the Lord hath dealt hardly with me." And they wept again, and Orpah departed, after she had kissed her mother-in-law,

but Ruth clave to her. Then Naomi said to her, "Behold thy sister-in-law hath gone back to her people and to her gods; do thou go after her." But Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall



RUTH GOETH WITH NAOMI.

be my people, and thy God my God; when thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." And when Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfast in her purpose, she sought no more to persuade her. So these two went on till they came to Bethlehem. And when they came, all Bethlehem was greatly moved, for they asked, "Can this be Naomi?" She said to

them, "Call me not Naomi, but call me Mara,¹ for the Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me. He sent me forth full, and He hath brought me back again empty." Now the time when Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem was at the beginning of barley-harvest.

There was in Bethlehem a certain man that was a kinsman of Elimelech. His name was Boaz, and he was very rich. Ruth said to her mother-in-law, "Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn² after any one in whose sight I may find favour." And Naomi said to her, "Go, my daughter." So she went and gleaned in the field, after the reapers; and her hap was to light on that portion of the field³ which belonged to the man Boaz. And behold Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to his reapers, "The Lord be with you!" and they answered him, "The Lord bless thee!" Then Boaz said to the servant that was over the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?" The man said, "This is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the land of Moab. She said to me, 'Let me glean after the reapers.' So she came, and hath continued from the morning until now, and hath scarcely rested at all." Then Boaz said to her, "Go not to glean in another field; abide here, keeping close to my maidens. None shall harm thee. And when thou art thirsty, go to the vessels, and drink of that which the men have drawn." When she heard this, she fell on her face before him on the ground, and said, "Why dost thou take notice of me, seeing that I am but a

¹ *Naomi* means "grace," *Mara*, "bitterness."

² It should be noted that only the poorest class in Palestine used barley for food. It is a proof, therefore, of the poverty of the two women that Ruth should be glad to glean in a barley-field.

³ The field was a common field, divided into portions, but without hedge.

stranger?" Boaz answered, "I have heard all that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law, and how that thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and hast come to a people which before thou knewest not. The Lord, under whose wings thou art come to seek refuge, recompense thee for it!"

And when the reapers rested for their meal, Boaz



RUTH AND BOAZ.

said to her, "Come hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar."¹

So she sat beside the reapers, and Boaz reached to her grain that had been roasted in the fire, and she ate till she was satisfied; but there remained something over from her portion. And when she rose up to glean again, Boaz said to his men, "Let her glean even

¹ The liquor was light and sour wine of the country, the Latin *posca*. Compare Matt. xxvii. 48.

among the sheaves,¹ and do not trouble her. Let fall also some handfuls for her, that she may glean them." So Ruth gleaned in the field all the day ; and when she had beat out all that was gleaned, she found that it was an ephah² of barley. This she took into the city to her mother-in-law. Also she gave her what had been left over when she ate bread. Naomi said to her, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day? Blessed be he that took notice of thee." Ruth answered, "The man in whose field I gleaned is Boaz." Then Naomi said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not ceased from His kindness both to the living and the dead. For this Boaz is one of our next kinsman." Now it was the law among the Jews that if a man died without children, his nearest kinsman should buy his inheritance and take his widow to wife, so that the name of the dead might not perish out of Israel. Naomi knew that Boaz was near of kin to Elimelech. Whether there was any one nearer she knew not. Ruth said to her mother-in-law, "The man said to me that I should keep by his men till they had ended his harvest." Naomi answered, "It is well ; do so, keep with his maidens, and go not into any other field." So Ruth kept by the maidens of Boaz till both the barley harvest and the wheat harvest were ended. Afterwards Naomi said to Ruth, "My daughter, I must see that you find a home. To-night³ Boaz winnows barley in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thyself, and put on thy best raiment, but take care that the man see thee not until he shall have done eating and drinking. But when he lieth down, mark the place where he shall lie, and go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down ;

¹ Among them not only after them.

² About seven gallons.

³ Corn was winnowed at night, both for coolness' sake and because the wind was stronger then than in the day.

and he will tell thee what thou shalt do." And Ruth said to her mother-in-law, "All that thou tellest me I will do." When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn.¹ And Ruth came softly, and lay down at his feet under the covering that was over him. And it came to pass at midnight that the man was afraid, and turned himself; and behold a woman lay at his feet. He said, "Who art thou?" She answered, "I am Ruth thine handmaid. Spread now thy skirt over me, for thou art a near kinsman." "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter. This is well done of thee that thou hast come to me and to none other for help. Fear not, I will do all that thou requirest; for all the city doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman, but there is one that is nearer than I. Tarry here this night; and in the morning, if he will perform the part of a kinsman, well; but if he will not, then will I perform it, as the Lord liveth. Lie down till the morning." So she lay down, and in the morning, before it was light, so that one could not see the other, she rose up. Then he said, "Bring thy veil² and hold it." And when she held it, he measured into it six measures of barley, that she might take them to her home. And she told Naomi all that the man had done, and how he had said, "Go not empty to thy mother-in-law." Then said Naomi, "Sit still, my daughter, till thou shalt know how the matter will end. The man will not be at rest until he have finished the thing, and that this very day."

¹ The heap of corn was of the newly-winnowed grain. The owner slept by it to keep it from the depredations of thieves.

² The veil was a garment which covered the upper part of the body, and could be drawn over the head.

In the morning Boaz went to the gate ; for there the men of the city were wont to assemble for counsel and converse. And when the kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken to Ruth came by, Boaz called to him, "Ho, thou ! turn aside, and sit down here." So they sat down. And Boaz said unto the kinsman, "Naomi, that has come back from the land of Moab, selleth a portion of land that belongeth to Elimelech that was her husband. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it ; but if thou wilt not, then tell me, that I may know. For thou art nearest to the dead, and I am next after thee, and there is none beside." The man said, "I will redeem it." Then Boaz said, "When thou buyest the land of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, for she is the widow of Elimelech's son. And her must thou take to wife, that the name of the dead may be preserved in his inheritance." The kinsman said, "This I cannot do, lest I mar my own inheritance. I cannot redeem it : redeem it thyself." Now the custom in Israel was that in a matter of redeeming or exchanging, a man took off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour, as a token that he gave over to him the right that was his own in law. Therefore the kinsman drew off his shoe, and gave it to Boaz, saying, "Take the right to redeem the inheritance of Elimelech and his son." And Boaz said to the elders and unto all the people, "Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought this day all that was Elimelech's, and Mahlon's, and Chilion's, and, moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, that was the wife of Mahlon, have I taken to be my wife, that I may raise up the name of the dead in his inheritance. Be ye therefore witnesses of this." The elders and the people answered, "We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thy house like Rachael and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel ; and

do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem."

And Ruth bare a son. And the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left thee without a kinsman, to preserve the name of thy husband and thy sons in Israel. For this child shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thy old age. For thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, and who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him." And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbours gave the child a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi," and they called him Obed, which is by interpretation "serving." This Obed was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

THE STORY OF DAVID

I.—The Champion

IN the days of King Saul there dwelt at Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, a certain man whose name was Jesse. He was the son of Obed, whom Ruth the Moabitess bare to Boaz, and Boaz again was the son of Salmon and Rahab of Jericho. This Jesse had eight sons and two daughters,¹ and the youngest of his sons was David.

The Lord, being displeased with Saul, said to Samuel, "Fill thine horn with oil, and go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem: for I have provided Me a king among his sons." So Samuel went. And the elders of Bethlehem, knowing that he and the king were not friends, said to him, "Comest thou peaceably?" And he said, "Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice to the Lord; purify yourselves, and come to the sacrifice." He bade also Jesse and his sons purify themselves, and he invited them to the sacrifice. And when they

¹ In 1 Chron. ii. 13-15 *seven* sons only are mentioned; the three whose names occur in the narrative above with Nethaneel, Raddai, Ozem, and "David the seventh." It may be conjectured that the eighth son, whose name is not given, died in youth after Samuel's visit to Bethlehem. The two daughters were Zeruiah and Abigail. The difficulty here is that Abigail is said to have been the daughter of Nahash (2 Sam. xvii. 25). The Jewish explanation is that Nahash is another name for Jesse. Dean Stanley suggests that Abigail was the daughter of Jesse's wife (whose name is not known) by a former husband, who may have been Nahash, king of the Ammonites. Zeruiah was the mother of Abishai, Joab, and Asahel; and Abigail of Amasa.

came, and he saw Eliab the eldest, and perceived how goodly and tall he was, he said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." But the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature ; because I have refused him : for the Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Then Jesse



THE CHOOSING OF DAVID.

made Abinadab, his second son, and then Shammah, his third son, pass before Samuel, and after these yet four others. But Samuel said, "The Lord hath not chosen these." He said again, "Are all thy children here?" Jesse answered, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and he keepeth the sheep." Then Samuel said, "Send and fetch him ; for we will not sit down till he come." So Jesse sent for him. Now he was a youth, short of

stature,¹ his hair of a ruddy colour, his eyes bright, and he was fair to look upon. And when he came, the Lord said to Samuel, "This is he; arise, and anoint him." So Samuel anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and from that day the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.

After these things Saul was troubled with a spirit of madness, and his servants said to him, "Let us seek out a man that is a skilful player upon the harp. When the evil spirit shall come upon thee, he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well." Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me now such a man, and bring him to me." One of them answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skilful in playing, a valiant youth,² and prudent of speech, and a comely person." So Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, "Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep." So Jesse sent a present of bread and wine and a kid by David to Saul. And David abode with Saul, and when the spirit of madness came upon the king David took his harp, and played with his hand, and Saul was refreshed and well.³

¹ We may gather so much from the special mention of the tall stature of Eliab, a characteristic which seems to have attracted the notice of Samuel, used as he was to the commanding presence of Saul ("from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people"). So, again, there is a marked contrast between his small figure and the giant Goliath. But, as Dean Stanley says, "The day was gone when kings were chosen because they were head and shoulders taller than the rest." But his short stature did not prevent his possessing great strength and activity. Psalm xviii. 29-34 is the passage in which David thanks God for the personal gifts which had been bestowed upon him. He was swift of foot, a characteristic shared by his nephew Asahel ("He maketh my feet like hind's feet"), and unusually strong ("a bow of steel [or rather bronze] is broken by my hands").

² His feats of strength in killing wild beasts, mentioned afterwards, may have become known. Possibly he had been engaged in affairs with banditti, of which nothing has been recorded.

³ The narrative of 1 Sam. xvi. adds that Saul "loved David greatly, and he became his armour-bearer." Perhaps we may suppose that these

After a while, because the king seemed to be healed of his madness, David departed from him and returned to Bethlehem, and fed his father's flocks, as he had done before. And while he was thus employed, the Philistines came up against Israel, and pitched their camp in Ephes-dammim,¹ and Saul and the men of Israel pitched on the hills over against them, and between them was the valley of the Terebinth.

There came a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath, whose height was nine cubits and a span.² And he was clad in a coat of mail that weighed five thousand shekels,³ with a helmet of brass upon his head, and greaves of brass upon his legs; and between his shoulders he carried a javelin of brass. The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the spear head weighed six hundred shekels.⁴ And one bearing a shield went before. And the man cried to the men of Israel, "Choose you a man for you, and send him to fight with me. If he be able to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail over him, and kill him, then shall ye serve us." But Saul and all Israel were dismayed at his words, for there was none that could match him in stature or in the strength of his armour. Forty days, day by day, did Goliath of Gath challenge the men of Israel.

It came to pass that at this time Jesse said to David his son, "Go now to the camp and carry an ephah⁵ of parched corn, and these ten loaves to thy brothers in the camp, and see how they fare, and bring back an

words express the feelings that *afterwards* grew up on the part of Saul. It is impossible to suppose that Saul should have entirely forgotten the person of a young man whom he had taken into such favour, as he would seem to have done from the narrative that follows.

¹ The word means "the bound, or end, of bloodshed."

² 9 feet 9 inches.

³ 157 lbs.

⁴ About 17 lbs.

⁵ Probably about four gallons and a half; but another calculation makes it nearly double as much.

answer from them. Carry also these cheeses to the captain of their thousand." For the three eldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle.

So David rose early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and came to the waggons with which the men of Israel had fortified their camp, as the host was going forth to the fight and shouted for the battle. Thereupon he left the things that he had brought with the keeper of the baggage, and ran into the army, and saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them the champion of the Philistines came forth from their camp, and cried as he was wont ; and David heard his words. But all the men of Israel fled from the sight of him, for they were sore afraid. They said to David, "Hast thou seen this man that is come up to defy Israel? The man that killeth him the king will enrich with great riches, and will give him his daughter to wife, and will make his father's house free of all tax and tribute."

Then David said, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" And the people answered him in the same words. When Eliab his eldest brother heard how he spake with the men, his anger was kindled against him, and he said, "Why camest thou hither? with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart. Thou art come down to see the battle." But David answered, "What harm have I done? did not my father send me?"

The words that David had said were told to Saul, and Saul sent for him. Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail him because of this Philistine ; behold, thy servant will go and fight with him." Saul

made answer, "Thou art not able to fight with this Philistine ; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." But David said, "I kept my father's sheep, and behold a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock ; and as he was carrying it away, I overtook him, and slew him ; and as I returned to the flock a lion met me ; him also I took by the beard and slew. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this Philistine shall fare as these, seeing that he hath defied the armies of the living God ; for truly He that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, will also deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said, "Go, and the Lord be with thee." And Saul clad him in armour, and put a helmet upon his head, and gave him a sword to gird upon his side. But David had never made trial of such things, and when he endeavoured to go in them, he could not. Therefore he put them off, and took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones out of the brook that ran in the valley, putting them in his shepherd's wallet, and so went, having his sling in his hand, and drew near to the Philistine. The Philistine also came on, and drew near to David ; and when he looked about, and saw David, he despised him, for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And he said to David, "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves ?" And he cursed him by his gods, and said to him, "Come near, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field." Then said David to the Philistine, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield ; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand ; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee ; and I will give

the carcases of the host of the Philistines to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."

And when the Philistine drew near, David ran to meet him ; and as he ran he put his hand into his wallet, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine on the forehead ; and the stone sank into



DAVID AND GOLIATH

his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone. But, because he had no sword, he ran and stood upon the Philistine, and drawing the man's sword out of its sheath, smote off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel pursued them even to Gath and Ekron ; and when they returned

from the pursuit they spoiled their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine and his armour.¹ But Saul said to Abner, captain of his host, "Abner, whose son is this youth?"² And Abner said, "As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell." Then the king said, "Inquire whose son the stripling is." And Abner brought David to Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, "Whose son art thou, young man?" David said, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

That day Saul took him, and would-let him go no more home to his father's house. Also Jonathan, that was Saul's son, and heir of his kingdom, loved him as his own soul; and he gave him his own robe, and his sword, and his bow, and his girdle. After this Saul made him his armour-bearer, and set him over his men of war; and on whatever errand David was sent he behaved himself wisely, and approved himself in the sight of the king's servants and of all the people.

But it came to pass one day that as he was returning, having made a great slaughter of the Philistines, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, and playing on instruments of music to meet him and the king. And one company sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands," and the other company answered, "And David his ten thousands." Thereat Saul was very wroth, for the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands only; now there is only the kingdom left for him."

¹ The mention of Jerusalem in 1 Sam. xvii. 52 is probably in anticipation. Jerusalem was at that time still in the possession of the Jebusites; but we may be sure that ultimately the armour would be brought there.

² This question does not necessarily imply that Saul had no knowledge of him, but only that now the young man might very well become a man of importance, it would be well to know what was his parentage.

And from that day forward he looked jealously upon David.

After a while madness came again upon Saul, and David played upon the harp to soothe him, as he had been wont to do at the first. But Saul sat with a javelin in his hand. Once he made as if he would



DAVID ESCAPETH FROM SAUL.

have cast it at David ; but David escaped out of his presence. Again, another time, he struck at David with it ; but David slipped away, and he smote the javelin into the wall.

After this the king sent David away, making him captain of a thousand, in which command he behaved himself so wisely that all the people loved him.

Now hitherto Saul had not fulfilled his promise that he would give his daughter to wife to the man who

should slay the champion of the Philistines. Therefore he said to David, "Behold my elder daughter Merab; her will I give thee to wife. Only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles." (But he hoped, that David would be slain by the Philistines, being unwilling to lay hands upon him himself.) And David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my father's house, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" But it came to pass at the time when Merab should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel of Meholah.

Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And when Saul knew of it, the thing pleased him, for he said to himself, "Now will I make my daughter a snare to David, and he shall be slain by the Philistines." Then he commanded his servants that they should say to David, "Behold the king hath delight in thee, and all men love thee. Why shouldst thou not marry the king's daughter?" But David said, "It is no easy thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man." Then Saul's servants answered him, "The king requireth no dowry from thee, such as he required of Adriel for his daughter Merab. Only bring him the spoils of a hundred Philistines." But the purpose of the king was that David should fall by the hand of the Philistines. The thing pleased David, and before the time had expired wherein it had been covenanted that the king's daughter should be given him, he went forth, he and his men, and slew two hundred of the Philistines, and brought their spoils to the king. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal to wife. Nevertheless from that time forward Saul hated David, and sought to slay him.

For a time, indeed, Jonathan his son, who loved David exceedingly, turned the king from his purpose, for he said unto him, "Let not the king sin against his

servant David, because he hath not sinned against thee, but hath served thee well. Did he not take his life in his hand, and slay the Philistine, the Lord working great salvation for Israel by him? Thou sawest it, and didst rejoice. Wherefore then wilt thou shed innocent blood, slaying David without a cause?"

Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan his son, and sware, "As the Lord liveth, David shall not be slain."

Then Jonathan brought David again into the presence of his father, and he abode with him; and when the Philistines came up again into the land of Israel, David went out against them, and slew them with a great slaughter.

But when Saul in his madness sought again to slay him with the javelin that he carried in his hand, David escaped by night to his own house. There the messengers of Saul watched him; and Michal his wife said to him, "If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou wilt be slain." So that night Michal let David down by a window, and he fled. But she took an image,¹ and laid it in the bed, and put a blanket of goat's hair over it, covering it up; and the spies of Saul thought that it was David's self. In the morning the king sent messengers to take David, and Michal said to them, "He is sick." Then he sent them again, saying, "Bring us up to him that we may see him." So Michal brought them up into the chamber; and behold there was an image in the bed covered with a blanket of goat's hair.

Then Saul said unto Michal, "Why hast thou deceived me thus, and caused my enemy to escape?"

¹ A *teraph*, a sort of household god to which a certain worship was paid, especially by women (as by Rachel, when she stole the teraphim from her father's house), though the practice was, of course, a distinct violation of the Second Commandment.

Michal answered Saul, "He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?"

Thus David fled from Saul, and became an outcast in the land of Israel.

II.—The Outcast

When David was escaped from his house he fled to Samuel, to Ramah, where was the school of the prophets. Thither Saul sent messengers to take him; but when the men saw the company of the prophets prophesying, the Spirit of God came upon them, and they prophesied. Then the king sent other messengers, and they prophesied also; and he sent a third time, and these also prophesied. Last of all he came himself; and the Spirit came upon him, and, having stripped off his outer garments, he prophesied before Samuel, and lay down all that day and all that night.

In the meanwhile, David fled from Ramah to the king's court, to Jonathan. And he said to Jonathan, "What have I done? what is my offence? what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?"

Jonathan answered him, "God forbid that this should be. My father will not do anything either great or small, but he will show it to me. It is not as thou fearest."

But David said again, "Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved. Verily there is but a step between my soul and death, for he hideth his purpose from thee."

Then Jonathan said, "Whatsoever thou wilt, I will do for thee."

David said to Jonathan, "To-morrow is the new

moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat"—for the king had invited him, making as though he were reconciled—"but let me go that I may hide myself for three days, till the feast be finished. If thy father at all miss me, then thou shalt say, David earnestly desired leave of me that he might hasten to Bethlehem, where there is a yearly sacrifice of his family. If thy father shall say, It is well, then shall I have peace; but if he be very wroth, then be sure that he hath determined evil against me. Deal therefore kindly with me; and if there be evil in me, slay me thyself."

Jonathan answered, "If I knew that my father had determined evil against thee, would I not tell thee?"

Then David said, "How wilt thou tell me?"

Then they went out together into the open country. And Jonathan said to David, "Surely I will tell thee, if my father determine evil against thee. And do thou show me kindness while I live; and when I am dead, cease not from showing kindness to my children after me, in the days when the Lord shall cut off all thine enemies from the face of the earth."

So David and Jonathan made a covenant together. Then Jonathan said to David, "Hide thyself by the stone Ezel. And on the third day I will come and shoot three arrows by the stone, as though I shot at a mark; and I will send a lad to find the arrows. If I say to him, The arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come, for there is peace; no harm is determined against thee. But if I say, The arrows are beyond thee; then go, for the Lord doth send thee away."

So David hid himself by the stone Ezel. On the new moon the king sat down to the feast, and Jonathan sat by the king's right hand, and Abner on the other

side ; but David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, "Something has befallen him ; he is not clean."¹ But on the morrow of the new moon, when David's place was again empty, Saul said to Jonathan, "Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to the feast, either yesterday or to-day ?"

Jonathan answered, "David earnestly desired leave of me that he might go to the yearly sacrifice of his family at Bethlehem, that he might see his brethren. Therefore he cometh not to the king's table."

Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said, "Thou son of the rebellious and perverse woman,² thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion. Surely as long as he liveth, thou shalt not be established in the kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him, that he may die."

But Jonathan said, "Wherefore should he be slain ? what evil hath he done ?"

Then Saul would have smitten him with a javelin. And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat nothing on the second day of the feast, being grieved for the wrong that his father did to David.³

On the morrow Jonathan went at the time appointed to the place where David had hidden himself, and shot the arrows as he had said. And he said to the lad, "Run, find out now the arrows that I shoot." And as he ran, he shot an arrow beyond him ; and when the lad came to the place, he cried, "Is not the arrow beyond thee ? Make haste, speed, tarry not." So the lad gathered up the arrows and returned to his master ; but he knew nothing of the matter. Only David and

¹ Some ceremonial defilement, as from happening to touch a dead body.

² This reviling of Jonathan's mother was, according to Eastern manners, the greatest insult that his father could have put upon him.

³ More, it should be noticed, than at the insult and violence offered to himself.

Jonathan knew. Then Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the lad, and said, "Go, carry them to the city." When the lad was gone, David rose up from his hiding-place,¹ and bowed himself before Jonathan three times to the ground. And they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace. The Lord be the witness of the covenant that is between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever." So David departed, and Jonathan went back to the city to his father.

David came to Nob,² where at this time was the tabernacle and the dwelling of Ahimelech the high-priest. Ahimelech was troubled at his coming, and said, "Why art thou alone?" for he had no companions, but only the young men his servants. David answered, "The king sent me on an errand, and commanded that none should know it. What provision hast thou? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever thou hast." The priest said, "There is no bread here but the hallowed bread." For it was the custom that, day by day, certain loaves, that were called the shewbread, were put hot in the tabernacle, and those which had been put there the day before were taken away and given to the priests. The loaves, therefore, that had just been taken from the tabernacle did Ahimelech give to David and his young men.

Then David said to the priest, "Hast thou here spear or sword? for I have neither brought sword or any weapons with me, because the king's business required haste."

The priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine,

¹ It would seem that he was unwilling to go without a leave-taking. The symbol of the arrows had been meant to give him the opportunity of immediate escape.

² A city near Jerusalem.

whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, wrapped in his cloak, is behind the ephod. If thou wilt take that, take it ; there is none other here save that."

And David said, "There is none like that ; give it me." From Nob he fled into the land of the Philistines to Achish, king of Gath. And when the servants of Achish saw him, they said, "Is not this the champion of Israel, of whom the women sang, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?" And when David saw that he was known, he was sore afraid of what Achish might do to him. Therefore he feigned himself mad. Then said the king to his servants, "Lo ! ye see the man is mad. Wherefore have ye brought him to me ? Have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence ?" and he drave him away.

Then David fled to the cave of Adullam.¹ Thither came to him his father and his mother and his brethren ; the sons also of his sister Zeruah—Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel. Many also that were in debt or had received injury from Saul, resorted to him ; and certain Canaanites also, and Ahithophel the Hittite. Over these he became a captain ; and there were with him about four hundred men. Also the prophet Gad came to him, and became his seer, delivering to him the oracles of God. Among them that resorted to him at this time were eleven warriors of the tribe of Gad ; men of war, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and who were swift as roes upon the mountains. These were they who swam over Jordan in the first month when he overflows all his banks, and put to flight the men of the valleys. Some even of the tribe of Benjamin, fellow-

¹ There seems to be some reason for believing that this cavern was about two hours' journey south-east of Bethlehem, at a place now called Khûrtieûn. This is the locality fixed by monastic tradition ; but others would place it nearer Bethlehem, in the region called the *Sephelah*.

tribesmen of King Saul, joined themselves to his company. These were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows from a bow.¹ But when others of this same tribe came with Amasa, that was son to Abigail, David's sister, David was troubled in mind, and going out to meet them, said, "If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be one with your hearts; but if ye come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing that I have done you no wrong, the God of our fathers requite you for it. Then Amasa answered, "We are thine, David: peace be unto thee and thy helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." Then David received them, and made them captains in his band.

About this time David went to Mizpeh of Moab, and said to the king of Moab, "Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, abide with thee, till I know what God shall do for me." And they dwelt with the king of Moab as long as David was in the hold.

After a while the prophet Gad said to David, "Abide not in the hold." So he departed, and dwelt in the forest of Hareth. While he was there, there came some that told him, "Behold the Philistines fight against Keilah, and rob the threshing-floors." And David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go and smite these Philistines?" And the Lord said, "Go up and smite them and save Keilah." But David's men were afraid. Therefore he inquired again, and the Lord

¹ This peculiar skill of the Benjamite seems to have been hereditary. Ehud the Benjamite (Judges iii. 15) was "left-handed." This word corresponds to the Greek *περιδέξιος*, capable of using both hands at once, as the hero Asteropæus does in his combat with Achilles, throwing two spears at the same time, and slightly wounding the hero with one of them. In the civil war (Judges xx.) we read of "seven hundred chosen men left-handed, every one of whom could sling stones at an hair-breadth, and not miss."

answered him as before. So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. And he abode in Keilah.

While he was there, there came to him Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech the priest, with the ephod in his hand. He only had escaped when Saul smote Nob, the city of the priests; for when Saul had heard how Ahimelech had received David, and had given him bread to eat, and also the sword of Goliath, he sent Doeg the Edomite, who also had told him of the matter, to slay him. So Doeg destroyed all that were in Nob—man, woman, and child. Only Abiathar escaped and fled to David. And David said to Abiathar, "I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul; I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh thy life, seeketh my life; but with me thou shalt be safe."

When Saul heard that David was in Keilah, he said, "God hath delivered him into my hand; for he is shut in a town that hath gates and bars." But David knew that Saul intended mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring hither the ephod."¹ And he asked, "Will Saul come down to Keilah?" And the Lord said, "He will come down." He asked again, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand?" And the Lord said, "They will deliver thee." Then David and his men, six hundred in number, departed from Keilah, and went whithersoever they could; and

¹ The ephod of the high-priest had the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim attached to it. This was the garment which Abiathar had carried off from the tabernacle at Nob. It was the recognised method of consulting the Divine will (Exodus xxviii. 30). David accordingly appeals to this in cases wherein, before Abiathar's coming, he had appealed to the prophet Gad.

the band was scattered, but David abode in the wilderness of Ziph that is between Hebron and Engedi. Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

The men of Ziph sent to Saul, saying, "David hides himself in our country. Come, therefore; and our



DAVID SPARETH SAUL.

part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand." So Saul went down after him, and came near to taking him; for Saul was on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. But there came a messenger to Saul, saying, "The Philistines have invaded the land." So he left off pursuing David, and went to fight against the Philistines.

After this David dwelt in strongholds of Engedi. When Saul heard of it, he pursued him with three thousand men. Now there was a cave wherein the shepherds kept their sheep, and Saul turned into it. But David and his men were in the back part of the cave. David's men said to him, "Behold, the Lord hath given thine enemy into thy hand!" Then David cut off the skirt of Saul's robe; but Saul knew it not. Yet David's heart smote him for having done even so much; for, said he, "He is the Lord's anointed." Nor would he suffer his men to do aught against the king. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

And when he was gone, David arose also, and cried after him, saying, "My lord the king." And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth. Then David said to Saul, "Wherefore listenest thou to those who say that David seeketh thy hurt. Behold, this day thine eyes see how the Lord delivered thee into my hand; and some bade me kill thee. But I spared thee; for I said, I will not put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed. See now, my father, the skirt of thy robe. In that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that I have no ill purpose, and that I have not sinned against thee. The Lord judge between me and thee; but my hand shall not be against thee."

Then Saul said, "Is this thy voice, my son David?" And he wept aloud. And he said to David, "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. To-day the Lord delivered me into thine hand, and thou killedst me not. If a man find his enemy, will he let him go? And now, behold, I know that thou shalt be king. Swear therefore to me that thou wilt not cut off my

posterity after me, nor destroy my name out of my father's house."

David swore this unto Saul ; and Saul returned to his place.

Nevertheless he came once more pursuing David in this same wilderness of Ziph. And David hid himself in the wood. Then Jonathan, Saul's son, came to him and encouraged him, saying, "Fear not ; for Saul my father shall not find thee ; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee ; and this my father knoweth." Then the two renewed their covenant that they had made between them ; and David abode still in the wood, but Jonathan returned to his house. And these two saw each other no more after that day. And when Saul had pitched his camp, he lay down to sleep behind the rampart of waggons, and the people lay round about him, with Abner the captain of the host. Then said David to Ahimelech and Abishai, "Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp ?" And Abishai said, "I will go down with thee." So they went down ; and behold, Saul lay sleeping behind the waggons, and his spear was stuck in the ground by his bolster. Then Abishai said to David, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand. Let me now smite him with the spear into the earth ; I will not smite him a second time." But David said to Abishai, "Destroy him not ; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless ? The Lord shall smite him ; or his day will come to die ; or he shall descend into the battle and perish ; but God forbid that I should stretch my hand against him." Then he took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster. After this the two got them away ; and no man saw it or knew it, for a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them all.

Then David went on the other side of the valley, and cried to Abner, the captain of the host, "Answerest thou not, Abner?"

Abner said, "Who art thou that criest to the king?"

And David said to Abner, "Art thou not a valiant man? who is like thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? For there came one of the people to destroy the king; and ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. For see now where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster."

Saul knew David's voice, and said, "Is this thy voice, my son David?" He answered, "It is my voice, my lord, O king. Wherefore dost thou pursue after thy servant? for what have I done?"

Saul said to David, "I have sinned; return, my son David; for I will do thee no more harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day. Behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly."

David said, "Behold the king's spear; let one of the young men come over and fetch it. The Lord render to every man according to his righteousness. Behold, as thy life was precious in mine eyes this day, so may my life be precious in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation."

Then Saul said to David, "Blessed be thou, my son David! Thou shalt do great things, and shalt prevail." So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place. Neither did these two meet any more.

Now there dwelt in the south of Carmel a certain rich man whose name was Nabal, of the house of Caleb.¹ He had very great flocks—three thousand sheep and a

¹ Possibly this means of a surly temper, a man like a dog, the word *Caleb* meaning "dog."

thousand goats. A churlish man he was, and evil in his doings; but his wife, Abigail by name, was a wise woman, and of a beautiful countenance. While Nabal was shearing his sheep, David sent to him ten young men with this message, "Peace be to thee, and to thy house, and to all that is thine. We have not hurt thy shepherds when they were near to us; neither was there ought missing all the time that they were in Carmel. Ask thy servants whether it be not so. And now, seeing that this is a time of rejoicing with thee, give whatsoever cometh to thy hand to thy servants, and to thy son David." The young men came to Nabal and spake thus. But Nabal answered, "Who is David? who is the son of Jesse? These are slaves that have run away from their master; for there be many such nowadays. Shall I take my bread, and my water, and the sheep that I have killed for my shearers, and give them unto men of whom I know not whence they be?" So the messengers came back and told these words to David; and David said to his men, "Gird ye on every man his sword." And they did so. And David said, "Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained to him; for now he hath returned evil for good. God do so and more also, to all the enemies of David, if I leave him aught remaining by to-morrow's light!" And he went up with four hundred men after him; but two hundred abode with the baggage.

Meanwhile the servants of Nabal went to his wife Abigail and told her, saying, "David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master, and he railed on them. Now the men were very good to us, neither missed we anything, as long as we were in their company. They were as a wall to us by day and by night, so long as we stayed in the wilderness. Consider, there-

fore, what thou wilt do ; for there is evil determined against this household."

Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two skins of wine, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and a hundred cakes of figs. These she laid upon asses, and on another ass she rode herself,



ABIGAIL MEETETH DAVID.

and said to her men, "Go on before with the present, but tell not the thing to Nabal." And as she went, she met David and his men. And when she saw him, she hasted, and lighted down from her ass, and fell upon her face, and said, "Let this offence be upon me, my lord. Harken now to the words of thy handmaid. Regard not this man Nabal ; for as is his name,¹ so is

¹ The word *Nabal* means "fool."

he. But I thine handmaid did not see the young men who came to him. But let this present which thine handmaid hath brought be for the young men that follow thee ; and forgive our trespass, for Jehovah will make of my lord a sure house, because my lord fighteth His battles. And it shall be when He shall have done to my lord according to all that He hath said, and shall have made thee ruler over Israel, that thou shalt have no trouble in thine heart, either that thou hast shed blood without a cause, or hast avenged thine own self."

Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath sent thee this day to meet me ; and blessed be thou, who hast kept me from shedding blood, and from avenging myself with my own hand. For in very deed, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, I had not left aught alive to Nabal by the morning light."

So David received of her hand the present which she had brought, and said to her, "Go to thy house in peace ; behold I have accepted thy request."

So Abigail returned to Nabal her husband ; and, behold, he held a great feast, as the feast of a king ; and his heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken. Therefore she told him nothing, good or bad, till the morning light. But the next day, when the wine was gone out of him, she told him all, both the danger in which he had been, and the present that she had given to David. And when he heard it, his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And on the tenth day he died.

After these things Abigail became David's wife. Now Michal, daughter of Saul, that had been married to him before, had been taken from him, and had been given to another.

It came to pass that as Saul pursued hard after

David, David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than I should escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall not seek me any more in the borders of Israel." So he took the six hundred men that were with him, and fled to Achish, the king of Gath. And Achish gave him the town of Ziklag in which to dwell.

David deceived Achish, making pretence that he invaded the land of Israel, while in truth he had invaded the land of the Amalekites, and of the other tribes that dwelt thereabouts. Achish therefore said, "He hath made his own people utterly to abhor him; therefore will he be my servant for ever."

After these things there arose war between Israel and the Philistines. And Achish said to David, "Thou shalt go with me to battle, thou and thy men." And David answered craftily, "Consider in what place thou wilt put me;" for neither would he fight against his own people, nor would he give offence to the king. And the king said, "Thou shalt be captain of my bodyguards."

Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek, and the men of Israel pitched their camp by a fountain that was in Jezreel. And David and his men were in the rearward of the army with Achish the king. Then said the princes of the Philistines, "What do these Hebrews here?" Achish answered, "Is not this David, whom Saul his master would have slain? He hath been with me many days, yea years, and I have found no fault in him since he came to me to this day." But the princes said, "Make this fellow go back to the place which thou hast given him to dwell in, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest he turn against us in the battle. How could he better reconcile himself to his master than with our lives?"

For is not this David of whom they sang one to another in dances—

“Saul slew his thousands,
And David his ten thousands?”

Then Achish called David, and said unto him, “As the Lord liveth, I have found thee upright; no evil have I seen in thee since the day of thy coming unto this day. Nevertheless the princes love thee not. Wherefore now go back to thy place in peace, that thou displease not the princes.”

David answered, “What evil hast thou found in me that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?”

Achish said, “Thou art good in my sight even as an angel of God. Nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go with us to the battle. Therefore rise up early in the morning with thy men, and so soon as ye have light, depart.”

So David and his men returned to the land of the Philistines, and on the third day they came to Ziklag where they dwelt. And lo, the Amalekites had come up out of the south country,¹ and had smitten Ziklag, and had burned it with fire. The women they had carried away captives; they had slain none, but had taken all and gone their way. And when David and his men came to the city, lo, it was wasted with fire; and their wives and children had been carried away captives. Then they wept till they had no more power to weep. And the people were very wroth with David because he had provoked the Amalekites,² and because he had left the town without defence. And they would have stoned him; therefore was he sorely distressed. So David said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring hither

¹ The Negeb.

² See p. 153.

the ephod." And David inquired of the Lord by the ephod, "Shall I pursue after these robbers? shall I overtake them?" And He answered, "Pursue after them, for without doubt thou shalt overtake them, and shalt recover all." So David pursued after them, he and his six hundred men with him. But when they came to the brook Besor, two hundred men were so faint that they could go no farther, and they abode by the brook. But David, with the four hundred, pursued after the Amalekites. And they found an Egyptian on the way and brought him to David. The man was nigh to death, so they gave him bread to eat and water to drink, also a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins they gave him, and the man's spirit revived within him; for he had eaten no bread and drunk no water for three days and three nights. David asked him, "To whom belondest thou? and whence art thou?" The man said, "I am of Egypt, and am servant to an Amalekite, and three days since my master left me, because I fell sick. We made a raid on the borders of Judah, and burned Ziklag with fire." And David said to him, "Canst thou guide me to this company?" And he said, "Swear to me by God that thou wilt neither kill me nor deliver me to my master, and I will guide thee to this company." So he guided him; and lo! they were spread over all the country, eating and drinking and dancing, because of the great spoil which they had taken out of the borders of the Philistines and out of the land of Judah. At twilight did David come upon them, and he smote them all that night even until the evening of the next day. There escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men that rode upon camels. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away. He rescued his two wives also; and there was nothing lacking to his men, whether small or

great ; they recovered all, whether it was sons, or daughters, or spoil. Also they took the flocks and herds of the Amalekites ; these were put by themselves, and were counted as David's portion.

As they returned, the men that had tarried behind for faintness at the brook Besor came out to meet them ; and David saluted them. Then said certain evil-minded men that were of his company, "Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered. None shall have aught save his own wife and children. Let them take these away and depart." But David said, "We shall not do so with that which the Lord hath given us ; for it is He that hath rescued us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hands. It shall not be so. He that stayeth with the stuff shall have an equal share with him that goeth down to the battle."

And this was made a statute and an ordinance in Israel for ever from that day.

Also David took of the spoil, and sent to all the people of the places which he and his men were wont to haunt.

Two days did David abide in Ziklag after he had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites. And on the third day there came a man out of the camp of Saul ; for Saul had encamped on Mount Gilboa, and had done battle there with the Philistines. 'And the man had his clothes rent, and earth upon his head. And when he came to David, he fell to the earth and did obeisance. And David asked him, "Whence comest thou ?" The man said, "Out of the camp of Israel have I escaped." And David said, "How went the matter ? I pray thee tell me." He answered, "The people fled before the Philistines, and many are dead ; Saul also is dead, and Jonathan his son." Then David

said to the young man, "How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?" The young man said, "I chanced to be upon Mount Gilboa; and I saw Saul, and he would fain have slain himself with his spear,¹ and the chariots and horsemen of the Philistines were close upon him. And he looked behind him, and saw me, and called me. And when I came, he asked me, Who art thou? And I answered, I am an Amalekite. And he said unto me again, Stand upon me and slay me; for I am in great anguish, because I cannot die. So I stood upon him and slew him; for I knew that he could not live. And I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was upon his arm, and have brought them unto my lord."²

Then David rent his clothes; and so also did all the men that were with him. And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until evening, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for all the people of the Lord, because they were fallen by the sword.

But David called the young man and said to him, "Who art thou?" He said, "I am an Amalekite." Then David said, "How wast thou not afraid to raise thy hand against the Lord's anointed?" And he bade one of the young men slay him. So the man smote him that he died. And David said to him, "Thy

¹ This is the meaning of the words "Saul leaned upon his spear." The account of the historian himself is that "he fell upon his sword."

² It is doubtful whether the story told by the Amalekite was true. The discrepancy on the point of the weapon used is but slight; but it seems that the historian supposed Saul to have slain himself, for he follows it up with an account of the death of his armour-bearer in these words: "When his armour-bearer *saw that Saul was dead*, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him." It is very likely that the Amalekite found the two lying dead together, and, removing the royal ornaments from the corpse of Saul, pretended that he had given him the finishing stroke. Having no notion of David's real feelings and character, he would naturally imagine that the act would be a recommendation.

blood be on thine own head, for thou hast testified against thyself, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed."

And David lamented over Saul and Jonathan his son with this lamentation :—

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places :

How are the mighty fallen !

Tell it not in Gath,

Publish it not in the streets of Askelon,

Lest the daughters of the Philistine rejoice,

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew,

Neither let there be rain upon you ;

For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away,

The shield of Saul, the anointed of the Lord.

From the blood of the slain,

From the fat of the mighty,

The bow of Jonathan turned not back,

And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Jonathan and Saul

Were lovely and pleasant in their lives,

And in their deaths they were not divided :

They were swifter than eagles,

They were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,

Who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights,

Who put on ornaments of gold on your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle !

O Jonathan, thou wast slain.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan :

Very pleasant hast thou been unto me :

Thy love to me was wonderful,

Passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen,

And the weapons of war perished !"¹

¹ In the A.V. we have, "Also he bade them teach the children of

III.—The King

It came to pass when Saul and his sons had fallen on Mount Gilboa, and the army of Israel was destroyed, that those who dwelt in the plains of Jezreel and by the borders of Jordan fled from their cities, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. Then the men, seeing that they wanted a leader, arose and anointed David to be their king; and when David inquired of the Lord in which of the cities of Judah he should set up his kingdom, the Lord said that he should set it up in Hebron. But Abner, that was captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, and made him king over the rest of Israel; and Ishbosheth reigned in Mahanaim that is on the other side of Jordan eastward.

After a while Abner went out with a company of men from Mahanaim to Gibeon in the land of Benjamin, for he would have the son of Saul dwell in the midst

Judah the use of the bow." This can hardly be correct. Probably the meaning is that this lamentation was called the "Song of the Bow" (from Jonathan's bow as mentioned in v. 22, where it is put before the "sword of Saul" as being the greater of the two), and that it was a regular custom that it should be learnt by heart.

NOTE.—It may be as well to put together what we are told about the remains of Saul and his sons. When the body of Saul was found by the Philistines it was stripped of the armour. The head was cut off and fastened on the wall of the temple of Dagon, probably in Ashdod. The armour was hung in the temple of Astarte (Ashtaroth), in Beth-shan, and the bodies of the king and his sons nailed up on the wall of the public square in that town—a place originally belonging to the tribe of Manasseh, but at that time, it would seem, in the hands of the Philistines. The inhabitants of Jabesh in Gilead, remembering how the dead king had at the very beginning of his reign rescued them from the Ammonites, crossed the Jordan, and entering Beth-shan by night, stole therefrom the bodies of the dead. These they carried back to Jabesh and burnt, burying the bones (left by the fire) under the great tamarisk-tree of the town, and keeping a fast for seven days. Nearly thirty years afterwards they were removed and buried in the ancestral sepulchre of Kish at Zelah in the region of the tribe of Benjamin.

of his father's tribe ; and Joab, the son of Zeruiah, went out against him with the servants of David. These two met by the pool in Gibeon, and encamped, the one on the one side of the pool and the other on the other side of the pool. Then Abner said to Joab, "Let us choose champions from our companies, and let them fight together before us." So they chose champions from each company—twelve of the tribe of Benjamin, which followed Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. And the twelve fought against the twelve. They caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword into his fellow's side ; so they all died together. Wherefore that place was called in after time, the Field of the Sharp Swords, because the victory had fallen neither to these champions nor to those. After this, there was a very sore battle ; and Abner and the men of Israel fled before the servants of David.

Now there was a certain Asahel, brother to Joab, captain of David's host ; and he was fleet of foot as a wild roe. This Asahel pursued after Abner, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. Then Abner looked behind him, and said, "Art thou Asahel?" He said, "I am." Then Abner said, "Turn to the right hand or to the left, and fight with some other, and take his spoil." For he was loath to fight with Asahel, seeing that he was David's kinsman. But Asahel would not. Then Abner said again, "Turn thee aside from following me. Wherefore should I smite thee? How, if I smite thee, can I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?" But Asahel refused to turn aside. Then Abner, willing to spare him, smote him with the hinder end of the spear ; but the spear pierced him so that he died.¹

¹ Probably, as he was running fast, he impaled himself upon it.

After this, Abner gathered the men of Benjamin together on the top of a certain hill. And when Joab came near, Abner called to him, saying, "Shall the sword devour for ever? Knowest thou not that such doings will cause bitterness in the end? How long shall it be before thou bid the people cease from following their brethren?" Joab said, "Hadst thou not spoken, the people had not ceased from following them till the morning." Then he blew a trumpet, and the people stood still, neither fought they any more. There fell that day of the servants of David nineteen men and Asahel; but of the men of Benjamin there died three hundred and threescore.

After this there was again war between the house of David and the house of Saul; and David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. And it came to pass that Abner was wroth with Ishbosheth, and said to him, "Dost thou forget what kindness I have showed to thee and to thy father's house? So God do to Abner, and more also, unless I do for David that which the Lord hath sworn to him—to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even unto Beersheba."¹ But Ishbosheth answered him not a word, because he feared him.

Then Abner sent messengers to David, saying, "Make a league with me, and I will help thee to bring all Israel to thee." David answered, "I will make a league with thee; but one thing I first require. Thou shalt not see my face unless thou bring Michal the daughter of Saul." So David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, saying, "Deliver me my wife Michal."

¹ That is, from the extreme north, where the Danites had made a settlement, to the extreme south, on the borders of the Negeb or south country.

And Ishbosheth sent and took her from Phaltiel her husband. But Phaltiel went weeping behind her to Bahurim in the land of Benjamin. Then said Abner to him, "Go, return." And he returned.

After this Abner spake to the men of Israel, "Ye sought for David in time past to be king over you. Now then make him king; for the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of My servant David will I save My people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies." Abner spake also in like manner to the men of Benjamin; and when he had so done he went up to Hebron to tell to David what seemed good to Israel and Benjamin. So he came to Hebron, and twenty men with him, and David made him a great feast. And Abner said to David, "I will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that he may reign over them." So he departed in peace.

Now Joab had gone out pursuing a troop of robbers, and when he returned they told him, saying, "Abner came to the king, and he has departed in peace." Joab said to David, "What hast thou done? Why hast thou sent Abner away? Dost thou not know that he came to deceive thee and to spy out thy ways?" And he sent messengers after Abner, and they found him resting by a well, and brought him back to Hebron. But David knew nothing of the matter. And when Abner was returned, Joab took him aside in the gate, as if to speak peaceably with him, and smote him so that he died. And this he did for Asahel his brother's sake, whom Abner slew.¹

When David heard it, he said, "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever of the blood of

¹ Probably this was the pretext; but the real reason was his fear lest Abner should supplant him in the confidence of the king.

Abner. Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house." And he said to Joab, and to all the people, "Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn for Abner." And he himself followed the bier. They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept. And the king lamented over him, saying, "Hath Abner died as some fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters; yet wast thou slain; as a man is slain by children of iniquity, so didst thou fall."

And all the people wept again over him. And when the people would have had the king eat meat while it was day, he sware, saying, "So God do to me, and more also, if I taste bread or aught else, till the sun be down." And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people, for they understood that day that it was not of the king that Abner was slain.

Moreover the king said to his servants, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen in Israel? And I am this day weak, though I be anointed king. These sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me. But the Lord shall punish the doer of evil according to his wickedness."

When Ishbosheth heard that Abner was dead he was greatly troubled, and all Israel with him. Now Saul had two captains of bands, men of Beeroth, which is a city of Gibeon. These men came to the house of Ishbosheth; and they went in with certain men that fetched wheat out of the store, and found Ishbosheth resting on his bed at noon. So they smote him, and cut off his head, and brought it unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, "Behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, the enemy that sought thy life. Thus

hath Jehovah avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his house."

But David said, "When one told me, saying, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took him and slew him in Ziklag; and he looked to have received a reward for his tidings. How much more when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? Shall I not require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?" So David commanded his young men, and they slew them. And when they were dead they cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron, to the intent that men should not do evil deeds or walk in evil ways. And the head of Ishbosheth they buried in the sepulchre of Abner.

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David in Judah, saying, "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out Israel and broughtest them back. And the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed My people Israel, and be a captain over Israel."

Then David the king made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed him king over Israel. And after he was anointed they abode with David three days eating and drinking, for their brethren that dwelt near to the city had prepared a great store of good things for them; bringing food on asses and camels and mules and oxen, even meal, and cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly; for there was joy in Israel.

Thirty years old was David when he began to reign. For seven years and six months he reigned in Hebron over Judah, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

When David had been anointed king over all Israel, he went up to Jerusalem, he and all the men of war with him, that he might set up his throne therein, for Jerusalem belonged as yet to the children of Jebus.¹ Now the citadel, which was called Mount Zion, was so strong that the Jebusites laughed David to scorn, putting the maim and the blind to man the walls. And David was wroth, and said, "Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites shall be captain of the host." Then Joab, the son of Zeruiah, climbed up first and smote the garrison, and David made him captain of the host.

When Hiram, king of Tyre, heard how David had taken the stronghold of the children of Jebus, he sent an embassy to him. Also he sent cedar trees from Lebanon, and carpenters and masons, that they might build a palace for the king.

Now the Philistines had heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, and they came up against him with their whole host. David therefore went down to the stronghold that was by the cave of Adullam, and there abode with his men of war; and the Philistines spread themselves in the valley of the giants.² And David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go up against

¹ Jerusalem had been taken shortly after the death of Joshua by the united forces of the tribes of Judah and Simeon. The inhabitants of the district were defeated in a battle at Bezek, and their chieftain Adonibezek taken prisoner. The city was then taken and burnt; but the citadel was so strong that it could not be stormed. The lower city was afterwards abandoned by the Israelites, for in Judges xix. (a narrative that belongs to a somewhat later time) it is spoken of as being "the city of a stranger that is not of the children of Israel." The tribe of Benjamin seems to have made a similar attempt a little later, but with no more result. "The children of Benjamin could not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day." (This possibly means, not that the city was jointly occupied, but that the Jebusites retained their settlement within the borders of Benjamin.) It is not mentioned again in the narrative till its capture by David.

² Rephaim. It is among the hills to the west of Jerusalem.

the Philistines?" And the Lord said, "Go up; for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thy hand." So David went up, and smote them; and he called the name of the place where he smote them "The Land of the Breaking-forth," "because the Lord," he said, "has broken forth upon mine enemies, even as waters break forth." For so suddenly had they fled that they left



THE WATER OF BETHLEHEM.

behind them the images of their gods, and these David and his men burned with fire.

Nevertheless the Philistines came up against him yet another time, and pitched their camp, as before, in the valley of the giants; and they set a garrison in Bethlehem, that was David's city. And while they were there, David longed, and said, "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of

Bethlehem, which is by the gate of the tower!" Thereupon three mighty men broke through the host of the Philistines and drew water out of the well that was by the gate of Bethlehem, and brought it to David. And these three were Abishai, Benaiah, and another.¹ Nevertheless David would not drink the water, but poured it out to the Lord, saying, "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this; is not this water the blood of these men that went in jeopardy of their lives?"

After this David inquired again of the Lord, "Shall I go up against the Philistines?" And the Lord said, "Thou shalt not go up straight against them; thou shalt go round about by the way of the balsam trees. And when thou shalt hear the sound as of a host marching in the tops of the trees, then thou shalt fall upon them suddenly." This David did, and smote them from Gibeon, as far as the way that goeth to Gezer.²

Not long after David and his men went down into the land of the Philistines, and fought against them. And David waxed faint in the battle; and one Ishbi-benob, who was of the sons of the giants, whose spear head weighed three hundred shekels, thought to have slain him; but Abishai succoured him, and slew the Philistine. Then the men of David sware to him, saying, "Thou shalt no more go out with us to battle, lest thou quench the light of Israel." Three times more did the men of Israel fight with the Philistines in their land, and each time did one of David's mighty men slay one of the sons of the giant.

¹ Of Benaiah it is recorded that he slew "two lionlike men of Moab," "an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits high" (7 ft. 6 in.), and also "a lion in a pit in a snowy day." The lion had taken up its abode, it would seem, in a dry cistern. The name of the third of the three heroes is not mentioned.

² Gezer was between Lower Beth-horon and the sea, and was therefore on the road to the country of the Philistines.

When David had rest from his wars, he went, and the chosen men of Israel with him, to fetch the ark from Kirjathjearim,¹ where it had been since the time when it was sent back by the Philistines, and he brought it to Jerusalem with great gladness. He and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord



THE BRINGING BACK OF THE ARK.

with shouting and with the sound of a trumpet. After this he said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth in a tent. Shall I build a house for it?" And Nathan said, "Go, do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee."

But the next day Nathan came again to David and said, "The Lord appeared to me in a vision of the

¹ City of Forests.

night, and said, Go, tell My servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build Me a house to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, but have dwelt in a tent. Spake I in time past to any of the tribes from whom I have taken rulers from my people, saying, Why build ye Me not a house of cedar? Thee have I taken from the sheep-cotes to be ruler over My people, and I have been with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off thine enemies before thee, and made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. And to My people Israel I have given a place that they may dwell in a land of their own, and be moved no more; neither shall they be afflicted as they were afflicted beforetime in the days of the judges. Nevertheless thou shalt not build Me an house; but when thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, then thy son that shall reign after thee shall build Me an house, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom."

Then David went into the Tabernacle of the Lord and said, "Who am I, O Lord, that Thou hast brought me to this honour? And now, as if this was a small thing, Thou hast promised that the kingdom shall be established in my house. Let it be therefore as Thou hast said, and let the house of Thy servant be blessed with Thy blessing for ever."

, These are the wars that David had with the nations round about. He took Gath and her towns from the Philistines, and made the Moabites tributary to him. And when Hadadezer, king of Zobah,¹ came up against Israel, he smote him, and took from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen. All the horses that he took

¹ Zobah was between Damascus and the Euphrates.

did David hough, save such as sufficed for a hundred chariots. And the shields of gold that the men of Hadadezer wore David took, and brought them to Jerusalem. And when the Syrians of Damascus came up to succour the king of Zobah, David slew of them two and twenty thousand; and he put garrisons in their cities, and they became tributaries unto him.

When the king of Hamath¹ heard how David had smitten the host of Hadadezer he sent Hadoram, his son, to salute him (for Hadadezer had wars with the king of Hamath) with a present of vessels of gold and of silver and of brass.

Also David fought against the Edomites. Twelve thousand did he slay in the Valley of Salt; and he set up a monument of his victory. And the Edomites became tributary unto him. So the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went. And David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice unto all his people.

When David was at rest from his wars, he said, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they brought him to David, and when David asked him concerning the house of Saul, he said, "Jonathan hath yet a son who is lame in the feet." So David sent and fetched him. And when he came unto David, he fell on his face, and did him reverence. And David said, "Mephibosheth." And he answered, "Behold thy servant." Then David said, "Fear not; I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul

¹ Hamath was a city in Upper Syria, in the valley of the Orontes. It was subdued by Sennacherib. "Where is the king of Hamath?" (Isa. xxxvii. 17).

thy father's father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." Then Mephibosheth bowed himself before the king, and said, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look on such a dead dog as I am?" The king called Ziba and said, "I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul. Now therefore thou and thy sons and thy servants shall till the lands, and shall pay of their produce to Mephibosheth." And Ziba said, "According to all that my lord the king hath commanded, so will thy servant do."

It came to pass after this that Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, died, and Hanun, his son, reigned in his stead. Then said David, "I will show kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash, even as his father showed kindness unto me." So David sent messengers to comfort him. But the princes of Ammon said to Hanun, "Thinkest thou that David hath sent his messengers to do honour to thy father? Rather hath he sent them to spy out thy city." Then Hanun took David's servants and cut off half their beards, and cut short their garments. Therefore David was wroth with the children of Ammon, and came up against them; and the children of Ammon hired soldiers from the Syrians, and from Maacah, and from Tob.¹ The children of Ammon set themselves in array on the hill near to the gates of Rabbah, their city, and the Syrians stood upon the plain.

Now Joab was the captain of the host of Israel; and when he saw that the Ammonites and Syrians stood facing each other, and that should he go against the one, then the other would be behind him, he divided his army into two parts. The choicest men he took for himself, and put them in array against the

¹ Maacah and Tob were two Aramite kingdoms near Gilead.

Syrians ; and the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai, his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon. And he said, "If the Syrians be too strong for me, then shalt thou help me ; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God ; and let the Lord do what seemeth good to Him."

Joab and his men drew nigh to the Syrians and fought against them, and they fled before him. And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians fled, they also fled before Abishai, and entered into their city. And Joab came back to Jerusalem ; but David went up with all the people against the Syrians, and smote them, taking seven hundred chariots and forty thousand horsemen, and slaying the captain of their host. After that the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

In the next year, at the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab and the host against the city of Rabbah, but he himself tarried in Jerusalem. And being there he sinned a great sin, for he took Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and caused that Uriah, her husband, should be slain. The way of his doing it was this.

He wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah, for Uriah had come to Jerusalem, saying, "Set ye Uriah where the battle is hottest, and retire from him, that he may be smitten and die." Then Joab assigned to Uriah a place where valiant men of the city were. These made a sally from the city, and the men of Israel fled before them, and Uriah was left alone, and was slain. Then Joab sent a messenger to David to tell him of that which had happened ; and he said to the

messenger, "If the king's wrath arise, so that he say to thee, Why went ye so near to the city? knew ye not that they would shoot from the walls? Did not a woman cast a piece of millstone from the wall of Thebez upon Abimelech, so that he died? Then shalt thou say, Thy servant Uriah, the Hittite, is dead also." The messenger went and showed David all that Joab had sent him for. And David said unto the messenger, "Say unto Joab, Let not this thing trouble thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another; make thy battle strong against the city, and overthrow it."

When Uriah's wife had mourned for her husband seven days, David took her to be his wife, and she bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

Therefore the Lord sent Nathan the prophet unto David. And he came and said, "Give me thy judgment in this matter. There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up in the house with him, and with his children. It did eat of his own bread, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that had come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come unto him."

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing is worthy to die. He shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

Then Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man.

Thus saith the Lord, I anointed thee to be king over Israel, and gave thee all that was Saul thy master's. And if this had been too little, I would have given thee more. Wherefore, then, hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, and taken the wife of Uriah to be thy wife, and slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon? Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house."

Then David said unto Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."

And Nathan said to David, "The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed thou hast given to the enemies of the Lord great occasion to blaspheme, the child that has been born unto thee shall surely die." And Nathan departed to his house.

After this the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David was very sick. And David besought God for the child, and fasted, and went to his chamber, and lay all night upon the ground. And when the elders of his house would have raised him up from the earth, he refused; neither would he eat bread. On the seventh day the child died. The servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice; what hurt will he do to himself if we tell him that the child is dead?"

But when David saw that his servants whispered together, he perceived that the child was dead. Then he said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." Thereupon David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped. Then said his servants unto

him, "What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread?" And he said, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

After this David's wife Bathsheba bare him another son; and David called his name Solomon; and the Lord loved him, and sent by Nathan the prophet that he should have also the name Jedidiah, which is by interpretation, Beloved of the Lord.

Meanwhile Joab fought against Rabbah, and took it. And he sent to David, saying, "I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the Lower City.¹ Now gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the Upper City, and take it; lest I take it, and the glory of its taking be mine."

So David went up against Rabbah, and took it. The crown that was upon the head of Milcom their god he took and set on his own head;² and the people he put to death with fire and sword.

Now the army of David was ordered in this fashion. First there was the band of the Six Hundred that were called "The Mighty Men."³ These had been with him when he wandered in the wilderness; and when one died, another was chosen into his place. The Six Hundred were in three bands, and each band again was in ten companies; and for each band was there a chief, and for each company a leader. The chiefs of

¹ Called the City of Water.

² Of course as a formal act. It was too heavy to wear, for it weighed "a talent of gold,"—that is, at the least, eighty pounds.

³ Gibborin.

the bands were the Three, and the leaders of the companies the Thirty. But the captain of the Six Hundred was Abishai, the brother of Joab.

Second there was the Body-guard, that was called the Cherethites and Pelethites. Their captain was Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada.

Third there was the Host, to which every man of the children of Israel was called, being grown to manhood, nor yet disabled by age. And this host was divided into twelve parts, for each month one, and the number of a part was four and twenty thousand. The leaders of the parts were from the Body-guard or the Six Hundred ; and the captain of the host was Joab.

It came to pass, when David was growing old, that there arose a great quarrel between two of his sons, namely, Amnon, his eldest born, and Absalom,¹ for Absalom hated Amnon, not without cause. After a while Absalom had a shearing of sheep in the land of Ephraim, and he made a petition to the king that he and his servants should come to it. But David said, "Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we put thee to a heavy charge." And though Absalom pressed him, he would not go, but he blessed him. Then said Absalom, "If thou wilt not go, let my brother Amnon go with us." David said, "Why should he go?" But Absalom pressed so that he let Amnon go and all his sons.

Now Absalom commanded his servants, "Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then kill him, and fear not."

And Absalom's servants did so. Then the king's

¹ Amnon was the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel, Absalom of Maachah, daughter of the king of Geshur.

sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.

But there came tidings to David, "Absalom hath slain all the king's sons; there is not one left." Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay upon the earth; and all his servants stood by, with their clothes rent.

Then Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, being a wise man, said, "Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king's sons. Amnon only is dead. For Absalom had determined to slay him." And while he spake the young man that stood on the watch-tower lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the hillside. And Jonadab said, "Behold, the king's sons come; as thy servant said, so it is."

But Absalom fled to Geshur, to Talmai, his mother's father.

After a while David was comforted for the death of his son Amnon; and he longed to see Absalom again; and would have called him back, but that all his household and his servants were against him in this matter. But when Joab perceived how the king's heart was inclined, he devised means for strengthening him in his purpose; for he sent for a wise woman of Tekoah, and put into her mouth certain words that she should say to the king. So the woman came to the king, and fell on her face to the ground, and said, "Save me, O king." And the king said, "What aileth thee?" So she said, "I am a widow woman. I had two sons, and they strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, and the one smote the other that he died. Now, therefore, the whole family is risen against thy hand-maid, saying, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother. So will

they quench the one coal that is left to me, and shall not leave to my husband either name or remainder upon earth."

Then the king said, "Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee."

The woman answered, "If there be iniquity in this matter, because the blood of the dead is not avenged, let it be on me and my father's house ; and the king and his throne be guiltless."

And the king said, "Whosoever saith ought to thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more."

The woman spake again, "I adjure thee by the Lord thy God, O king, that thou suffer not the avengers of blood to slay my son."

Then the king said, "As the Lord liveth, there shall not fall one hair of thy son to the earth."

Whereupon she said, "If this be so, why hast thou thought to do such a thing against the people of Jehovah? Surely thou hast thus condemned thyself for that thou dost not fetch home thy banished ; for we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God does not punish the sinner with death, but deviseth means by which He may recall His banished unto Him."

Then the king perceived that the matter was not of the woman's own devising ; and he said, "Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?"

The woman answered, "The king speaketh that which is true. Thy servant Joab put all these words in my mouth. Surely my lord is wise, even as an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth."

The king sent for Joab and said, "Let the young man come back to his house, but let him not see my face."

So Joab went, and fetched Absalom from Geshur, and Absalom returned to his house.

Now in all Israel there was not one to be praised so much for his beauty as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. His hair, which he cut every year, for it was heavy upon him, was twenty shekels in weight.¹

For two years Absalom dwelt in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. Therefore he sent for Joab, that Joab might bring him unto the king. Twice he sent for him, but Joab would not come. Then Absalom bade his servant set fire to a field of barley that was Joab's, and was near to his own. And they set the field on fire. Then Joab came to Absalom, and said, "Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?" Absalom said, "Because thou wouldest not come to me. Wherefore am I come from Geshur? It had been good for me to abide there. Let me now therefore see the king's face, and if I have done wrong, let him kill me."

So Joab brought Absalom before the king, and Absalom bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed him.

After these things Absalom thought to make himself king in the room of his father David. First he prepared for himself chariots and horses and fifty men to run before him. Also he rose up early, and stood in the way that led to the gate of the city; and when any man brought a cause to the king for judgment, Absalom called him, and said, "Of what city art thou?" And the man would answer, "Thy servant is of such or such a tribe." Then Absalom said, "Thy cause is good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee." Further he said, "Oh that I were made judge in the land,

¹ I have altered the *two hundred* of the text into *twenty*. The former weight is equivalent to 6 lbs., a quite impossible amount. The tenth part of it would be large, but not incredible.

that every man that had any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!" Furthermore, when any man came nigh to him to do obeisance to him, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

After four¹ years he sent to the king, "I pray thee, let me go and fulfil my vow which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow when I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall indeed bring me again to Jerusalem, then will I serve the Lord."

The king said, "Go in peace."

Now Absalom had sent men secretly throughout all the tribes of Israel, who should cry, when they heard the sound of the trumpet, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron." So Absalom arose and went to Hebron, and two hundred men with him, that went as guests to his feast. They went in their simplicity, and knew not anything² of the matter. Also he sent for Ahithophel, David's counsellor. Now Ahithophel was grandfather to Bathsheba, that had been wife to Uriah the Hittite, whom David had slain; and he bare ill-will to David for this matter.

Then came a messenger to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are gone after Absalom." Then David said unto his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom; make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword."³

¹ "Forty" in the text, a clearly impossible number.

² Very likely these were kept as hostages.

³ David was unwilling that Jerusalem should have to undergo the horror of a civil war. We may compare the motives which Cicero declares to have actuated him in going into exile without attempting an appeal to the large party which favoured his policy.

The king's servants said unto him, "Behold thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint."

So the king went forth, and all the people after him; and he abode that night in a house that was called the Far House.¹ The Six Hundred also went with him under Ittai the Gittite. Then said the king to Ittai, "Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and serve the new king. Thou art but a stranger here, and camest but yesterday. Why then should I make thee go with me when I am driven forth? Return thou, and take thy brethren with thee. Mercy and truth be with thee!"

Ittai answered the king, and said, "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, there shall thy servant be."

Then David said to Ittai, "Pass over Kidron," and he passed over with his men. And all the country wept with a loud voice, as the king passed over the brook, going the way of the wilderness.

And lo! Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites that were with them, came bearing the ark of the covenant. But David said, "Carry the ark back into the city. If I find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back again, and I shall see both it and my own house. But if He say, I have no delight in thee, then lo! I am here. Let Him do as it seemeth good to Him."

Then David went up the Mount of Olives. Barefoot he was, and he had his head covered; and all the people that were with him had their heads covered, and they also wept sore. And it was told David, "Ahithophel is among them that are conspirators with

¹ Probably a house where the road to Jericho crosses the Kidron.

Absalom." And David said, "O Lord God, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." And when he was come to the high place on the top of the mount, Hushai the Archite came to him with his coat rent and dust upon his head. David said unto him, "If thou passest on with me, thou wilt be a burden unto me ; but if thou wilt return to the city, and wilt say to Absalom, As I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I be now thy servant, then thou mayest defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel. Lo ! Zadok and Abiathar the priests are with thee there. Therefore whatsoever thou shalt hear in the king's house, tell it to the priests ; and they shall send it unto me by their two sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan."

So Hushai returned to Jerusalem ; and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

When David was now a little past the top of the hill, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him, with two asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred cakes of figs and dates, and a skin of wine. And the king said to Ziba, "What meanest thou by these?" And Ziba said, "The asses be for the king's servants to ride on ; and the bread and the fruit for the young men to eat ; and the wine, that such as shall be faint in the wilderness may drink."

And the king said, "Where is thy master's grandson?"

Ziba said unto him, "Behold ! he abideth at Jerusalem, for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father."

Then David said to Ziba, "Thine be all that is Mephibosheth's."

Ziba answered, "I humbly beseech that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king."

As David went on by the border of Benjamin, one Shimei, that was of the house of Saul, came forth out of his house, cursing as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at his servants ; the people and the Six Hundred being on his right hand and his left. And Shimei said, "Get thee out, thou man of blood, thou son of Belial ! The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned ; and hath delivered the kingdom into the hands of Absalom, thy son. Behold, thou art taken in thine own evil, because thou art a man of blood."

Then said Abishai unto the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king ? Let me go over the valley and take his head."

But David answered, "Let him curse, because the Lord hath bidden him curse. Behold, Absalom, my own son, seeketh my life ; how much more may this Benjamite do it ? Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look upon my affliction, and requite me good for his cursing this day."

And as David went by the way, Shimei went along by the hillside over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones, and cast dust. And the king and all the people came to the inn that is called Weary, and refreshed themselves.

When Absalom and the men of Israel and Ahithophel were come into Jerusalem, Hushai, David's friend, came to Absalom and said, "God save the king ! God save the king !"

And Absalom said to Hushai "Is this thy kindness to thy friend ? Why wentest thou not with thy friend ?"

Hushai said to Absalom, "Nay ; but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel choose,

his will I be, and with him will I abide. Also, as I have served thy father, so will I serve thee."

Absalom asked Ahithophel for his counsel. Now the counsel of Ahithophel in those days was esteemed as the oracle of God ; by both David and Absalom was it so esteemed. Ahithophel therefore said, " Let me choose out now twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David this night ; and I will come upon him when he is weary and weak, and take him by surprise. All the people that are with him will flee, and I will smite the king only, and will bring back the people to thee. If we slay David, then wilt thou have thy wish, and the people shall be in peace."

This counsel pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel. Nevertheless Absalom said, " Call now Hushai, and let us hear likewise what he saith."

So Hushai came, and when Absalom told him what Ahithophel had counselled, he said, " The counsel of Ahithophel is not good at this time. Thou knowest that thy father and hismen are mighty men, and that they are full of wrath, even as a bear that hath been robbed of her whelps. Also thy father is a man of war from his youth. He will not lodge with his people, that thou canst take him by surprise. He is hid now in some pit or in one of the strongholds of the land. There will be a fight for his life, and some of our people will be slain, so that men will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. Then will the heart even of the valiant man, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, melt utterly, for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and that they who are with him are valiant men. Therefore my counsel is this : Gather all Israel together from Dan to Beer-sheba, till the host be as the sand that is by the sea for multitude ; and go also to battle in thine own

person. We shall come upon him in his hiding-place, and overwhelm him, even as the dew covereth the ground; and of him and of all that are with him there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall Israel bring ropes unto that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there."

Then Absalom and all the elders said, "The counsel of Hushai is better than the counsel of Ahithophel." For the Lord had commanded that the good counsel of Ahithophel should be defeated, that He might bring evil upon Absalom.

Hushai told the whole matter to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and said unto them, "Send now to David, and warn him that he tarry not in the wilderness this night, but pass speedily over Jordan, lest he and the people that are with him be destroyed." For he feared even yet that the counsel of Ahithophel might be followed.

Now Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, and Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, stayed by the Fuller's Fountain that is outside the city; for they might not be seen to come into the city. And a maid-servant from the priests' house went and told them, and they went to tell it to David. Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom. The young men went in haste, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, where there was a well in the courtyard. And because they knew that they were pursued,¹ they went down into the well. Then the woman of the house spread the curtain of the door over the mouth of the well, and on this she put peeled barley, as if she would dry it in the sun.

¹ Probably their pursuers were on horseback, while they were certainly on foot. Catching sight of the riders, they would find it necessary to hide themselves.

But no one knew of the matter save the woman only. When Absalom's servants came up they found the woman in the house; and they said to her, "Where are Jonathan and Ahimaaz?" She said, "They are gone over the brook." So the servants of Absalom departed. When they were gone Jonathan and Ahimaaz came up out of the well, and went and told all the matter to David.

Then David and all the people that were with him passed quickly over Jordan. By the morning light there was not one that had not passed over.

But when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and gat him to Giloh, his own city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself.

David came to Mahanaim, and pitched his camp there;¹ and Absalom and the men of Israel passed over Jordan, and pitched in Gilead.

When David was come to Mahanaim, Shobi the Ammonite,² and Machir who had brought up Mephibosheth, and Barzillai the Gileadite, brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and kine, for David and for the people that were with him in the wilderness, for they said, "The people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty in the wilderness."

Then David mustered the people that were with him, and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. A third part he gave to Joab, and a third part to Abishai, and a third part to Ittai. And he said to the people, "I will surely go forth with

¹ Mahanaim had been the capital of Ishbosheth's kingdom. Both armies were now on the east side of Jordan.

² Possibly Shobi had been appointed governor of the Ammonites after the subjugation of their country.

you myself also." But the people answered, "Thou shalt not go forth. If we flee, none will care ; no, nor if the half of us be slain. There are ten thousand like to us, but not one like thee. Therefore let it be thy part to succour us out of the city."

Then the king said, "What seemeth to you best that will I do."

And he stood by the gate side, and all the people went out by their hundreds and their thousands. And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, "Deal gently with the young man Absalom for my sake." And all the people heard him when he thus spake. So the people went out into the field against the men of Israel,¹ and the two hosts met in a place that was called the wood of Ephraim.² And Israel fled before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter, for the battle was scattered over all the face of the country, and more were lost in the wood than fell by the sword.

Absalom, as he fled, came upon the servants of David. Now he was riding on the king's mule, and as he rode he went under the boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his hair was caught in the boughs, so that he hung between heaven and earth ; and the mule went away from under him. And a certain man saw it, and went and told Joab, "I saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree."

Joab said unto the man, "Didst thou see him and not smite him there to the ground? I would have given thee ten shekels³ of silver and a girdle."

The man said, "Though I should receive a thousand

¹ It was practically a war between Judah and Israel.

² This, of course, could not have been the great forest which was part of the inheritance of the tribe of Ephraim (Joshua xvii. 15-18), but a wood so called from some circumstance unknown to us.

³ About five ounces of silver.

shekels of silver, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son ; for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Verily I should have contrived mischief against myself ; for nothing is hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me."

Joab answered, " I may not lose time in talking with thee." And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them into Absalom while he hung yet alive in the tree ; and the young men that bare Joab's armour made an end of him.

After this Joab blew the trumpet, and called back the people from pursuing after Israel. But Absalom they took, and cast into a great pit in the wood, and piled a great heap of stones over him.

Now Absalom in his lifetime had reared a pillar for himself in the King's Vale near to Hebron ; for he said, " I have no son to keep my name alive ;"¹ and he called the pillar after his own name.

Then said Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, " Let me now run, and bear tidings to the king, how the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies."

Joab said, " Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, because the king's son is dead." But he said to a slave that he had, " Run thou and tell the king what thou hast seen."² So the man bowed himself and ran.

After which Ahimaaz said again to Joab, " Let me run after thy messenger."

Joab answered, " Why wouldest thou run, seeing that thou hast nothing more to tell ?" Nevertheless, when he urged him, he let him run.

¹ He is spoken of before as having three sons. Doubtless they died in infancy.

² He preferred that the bad tidings should not be taken by one who was in favour with David.

Now the slave ran by way of the hills, and Ahimaaz by the way of the valley of Jordan;¹ and Ahimaaz overran the slave.

The king sat between the two gates; and the watchman that was on the roof above the gates saw a man running, and told the king. The king said, "If he be alone, he bringeth tidings." And he came apace, and drew near. Then the watchman saw another man running, and he called the porter and said, "Behold another man running alone." And the king said, "He also bringeth tidings."

The watchman said, "The running of the first is as the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok."

The king answered, "He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings."

Then Ahimaaz called unto the king, and said, "All is well." And he fell to the earth on his face before the king, and said, "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath held them back that lifted up their hand against my lord the king!"

And the king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not the cause." So the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So he turned aside and stood still. Then came that other and said, "Tidings, my lord the king; for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all that rose up against thee."

And the king said to the man, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

The man said, "The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is."

And the king was much moved, and went up to the

¹ The narrow depression through which the Jordan flows.

chamber over the gate and wept ; and as he wept he said, " O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son ! "

It was told Joab, saying, " Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom. " And the joy that day was turned into mourning for all the people ; for the people heard say how the king was grieved for his son ; and the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. But the king covered his face, and cried with a loud voice, " O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son ! "

Then Joab came into the house, and said, " Thou hast shamed this day the faces of thy servants, who have saved thee this day, and thy wives and thy sons and thy daughters. For thou lovest thine enemies and hatest thy friends. Surely thou hast declared this day that thou regardest not either princes or servants ; for I perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore go forth from thy house, and speak kindly to thy servants, for I swear by the Lord, that if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night ; and that will be worse for thee than all the evil that hath befallen thee from thy youth until now. "

So the king arose, and sat in the gate ; and when it was told that the king sat in the gate, all the people came before him ; but the followers of Absalom had fled to their own homes.

After this David spake to Zadok and Abiathar, " Say to the elders of Judah, Why are ye the last to bring the king back, now that all Israel hath come to him, seeing that ye are of his kindred ? And say to Amasa, Thou shalt be captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab. "

These words bowed the hearts of the men of Judah as the heart of one man. And they sent to the king, saying, "Return." So the king returned and came down to Jordan, and the men of Judah came down to Gilgal to meet the king and conduct him over Jordan.

Also Shimei, that had cursed the king, came, and a thousand men of Benjamin with him. Ziba also came up with his fifteen sons and twenty servants. And Shimei said, "Let not the king remember what I did perversely on the day when my lord went out of Jerusalem. I know that I have sinned; therefore I am come the first of all the tribes to meet my lord the king."

But Abishai said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death, seeing he has cursed the Lord's anointed?"

David answered, "Ye are too hard for me, ye sons of Zeruiah. There shall no man be put to death this day in Israel; for am I not assured this day that I am king over Israel?"

So the king said to Shimei, "Thou shalt not die." And the king confirmed his promise by an oath.

Now Barzillai the Gileadite, being one of them who nourished the king and his servants when they lay in Mahanaim, came down from his place, to go over Jordan with the king. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, being fourscore years old, and he was very rich. The king said unto him, "Come over with me, and I will feed thee with me at Jerusalem."

But Barzillai answered, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old, and can I discern between good and evil? Can I taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Wherefore should I be a burden to my lord the king? I will go a little way over

Jordan with my lord ; and why should the king recompense it with so great a reward ? Let me turn back again, I pray thee, that I may die in my own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham, my son. Let him go over with my lord ; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee."

And the king answered, "Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him as shall seem good to me. And whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do."

So Chimham went over with the king, and when they had crossed over Jordan the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him ; and Barzillai returned to his own place.¹

When he was come to Jerusalem Mephibosheth met him. He had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes from the day the king departed until the day when he came again in peace. The king said unto him, "Why wentest thou not with us, Mephibosheth ?"

He answered, "My lord, my servant deceived me. I said to him, Saddle me my ass that I may ride thereon, for I am lame. But he did it not, but went unto the king, and slandered me unto him. But do that which is good in thine eyes, for my lord the king is as an angel of God. For all my father's house were but as dead men before thee ; yet didst thou set me among them that did eat at thine own table. What right have I, therefore, to cry any more unto the king ?"

The king said, "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters ? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land."

¹ Chimham appears to have settled in Bethlehem ; for we hear, five centuries after this time, of a house at that place called the House of Chimham (Jer. xli. 17).

But Mephibosheth said, "Yea, let him take all, so that my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house."

Now the men of Judah and half the men of Israel were with the king as he returned to Jerusalem. Then came the rest and said, "Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen thee away, and brought thee over Jordan without our knowing?"

The men of Judah answered, "Because the king is near of kin to us. Wherefore then are ye angry with us for this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's cost? Hath he given us any gift?"

The men of Israel said again, "We have ten parts in the king, and the greater right in him than you. Wherefore then did ye put this slight on us, that our advice was not first had in bringing back our king?"

But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

Now there was a certain evil man, whose name was Sheba, a Benjamite. He blew a trumpet and said, "We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his house, O Israel." So the men of Israel left following David and went after Sheba, but the men of Judah clave unto their king. Then David said to Amasa, "Gather me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou present thyself." And Amasa went, but he tarried beyond the time.

Then said David to Abishai, "Now shall Sheba do us more harm than did Absalom. Take thou my servants and pursue him, lest he get into some fenced city, and escape us."

So Abishai went out with Joab's men, and with the Six Hundred, to pursue after Sheba.

When they were by the great stone at Gibeon,

Amasa came to meet them. Now Joab had on him his soldier's cloak, and beneath it his sword hanging from the belt; and as he went to greet Amasa, the sword chanced to fall from its sheath. Then Joab picked it from the ground with his left hand, and with his right hand he took hold of Amasa's beard to kiss him, saying, "Art thou in health, my brother?" But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's left hand. Then Joab smote him unawares with the sword under the fifth rib, nor needed to smite him again,¹ for he fell dead. And Joab and Abishai pursued after Sheba. Then one of Joab's servants cried, "He that is for David, let him follow after Joab;" and when he saw that all the people tarried where they saw Amasa lying in his blood in the midst of the highway, he took him from the highway into the field, and cast a cloth over him. After this all the people followed Joab.

Now Sheba had shut himself up in Abel-Beth-Maachah;² and Joab besieged the city, and cast up a bank against it hard by the wall; and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

Then cried a wise woman from the wall of the city to Joab, "Come near, I pray thee, that I may speak with thee." So he came near.

Then the woman said, "Art thou Joab?"

And he said, "I am."

She said again, "Hear the words of thine handmaid."

He answered, "I hear."

Then she spake, saying, "They were wont to say

¹ A proof of Joab's strength and dexterity that so deadly a blow should have been delivered with the left hand.

² The House of Maachah,

in old time, Let us ask wise counsel in Abel ; and so they ended the matter. Now we love peace and loyalty. Why then seekest thou to destroy a city and a mother in Israel ? Why wilt thou devour the inheritance of the Lord ? ”

Joab answered, “ Far be it, far be it from me to destroy or to devour. The matter is not so. A man of Mount Ephraim, Sheba by name, hath lifted up his hand against King David. Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city.”

And the woman said unto Joab, “ Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.”

So the woman gave her counsel to the people ; and they cut off the head of Sheba, and cast it to Joab ; and Joab left besieging the city.

After these things David was moved in the pride of his heart to number Israel ; and he said to Joab, “ Go through all the tribes and take the number of the people.”

Joab said to the king, “ The Lord thy God add to the people, how many soever they be, an hundred-fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it ; but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing ? ”

Nevertheless the word of the king prevailed against Joab. So he and the captains of the host went through all the land numbering the people, and at the end of nine months and twenty days they came again to Jerusalem, and gave the number of the people to the king. Of Israel there were eight hundred thousand fighting men, and of Judah five hundred thousand. But David's heart smote him that he had done this thing.

Then Gad, David's seer, came to him and said, “ Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things. Choose thee one of them that I may do it unto thee. Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land ? or

wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies? or shall there be three days' pestilence in the land?"

David said unto Gad, "I am in a great strait. Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man."

So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, and there died of the people seventy thousand men.



THE ANGEL OF PESTILENCE.

And David saw the angel of the Lord by the thrashing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, that was in the stronghold of Jerusalem. And David said, "Lo, I have sinned, and done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me, and against my father's house."

That day came Gad, the seer, to David, and said,

"Go up, rear an altar to the Lord in the thrashing-floor of Araunah." And David did as the Lord commanded. And Araunah saw the king and his servants coming, and he went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face to the ground.

Araunah said to the king, "Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant?"

The king answered, "To buy the thrashing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people."

Then Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good to him. Behold, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and the thrashing instruments and harness of the oxen for wood."

All these things did Araunah, as a king, give to the king, saying, "The Lord thy God accept thine offering."

But the king said, "Nay, but I will buy these things of thee for a price; neither will I offer burnt-offerings to the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."

So David gave to Araunah for the thrashing-floor and for the oxen and for the instruments fifty shekels of gold.¹ And he built there an altar, and offered sacrifice. And after this the plague was stayed.

When David was old, Adonijah, his eldest son,² thought in his heart to be king. He was a very goodly man, and his mother bare him after Absalom; and his father had never thwarted him at any time. And he conferred with Joab and Abiathar, and they followed

¹ About £100. In 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, the price is given as fifty shekels of silver; in 1 Chron. xxi. 24, as "six hundred shekels of gold." The explanation given is that there were fifty gold shekels each worth twelve silver shekels. We thus get the two numbers, fifty and six hundred, and the proportion of value between gold and silver is fairly near the truth.

² He was the eldest, now that Amnon and Absalom were dead. Probably the second son, Chileah, whose mother was Abigail, died in his youth.

him ; but Zadok and Nathan, and the rest of the Six Hundred, were against him.

Adonijah made a great feast at the Fuller's Fountain, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the king's servants, but Nathan and Benaiah and Solomon and the Six Hundred he called not.

Nathan said to Bathsheba, "Hast thou not heard that Adonijah is king, and David our lord knoweth it not? Let me, I pray thee, give thee wise counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. Go, get thee in unto King David, and say, Didst thou not swear unto thine handmaid that Solomon, my son, should reign after thee? why then doth Adonijah reign? Behold, while thou talkest there with the king, I also will come in and confirm thy words."

So Bathsheba went in unto the king, and did obeisance, and spake as Nathan had bidden her ; and she told him what Adonijah had done. While she yet talked with the king Nathan came in and bowed himself to the ground before the king, and he said, "My lord, O king, is it thy pleasure that Adonijah should reign after thee? Lo! he hath made a great feast, and called thereto the king's sons and the captains of the host, and they eat and drink before him, and shout, God save King Adonijah."

Then the king said to Bathsheba, "As the Lord liveth that hath delivered me all my life, even as I swear, saying, Solomon, thy son, shall reign after me even so will I do this day."

Then he sent for Zadok the priest, and Nathan and Benaiah, and said, "Take with you the Guard and the Six Hundred, and cause Solomon, my son, to ride upon my own mule, and bring him down to the Valley of Siloam, and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel ; and

blow ye with the trumpet, and cry, God save King Solomon! So shall he be king after me."

So Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and they anointed Solomon to be king. And they blew the trumpet, and all the people cried, "God save King Solomon!" And they played with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy.



THE ANOINTING OF SOLOMON.

And Adonijah and his guests heard it when they had made an end of eating. When Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, "What meaneth this uproar in the city?"

While he yet spake, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, came; and Adonijah said, "Come in, for thou art a good man, and bringest good tidings."

Jonathan answered and said, "Verily our lord King

David hath made Solomon king ; and he hath sent with him Zadok, and Nathan, and Benaiah, and the Guard, and the Six Hundred, who have caused him to ride on the king's mule, and have anointed him king in Siloam. Great hath been the rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard."

And when Adonijah's guests heard this they were afraid, and rose up, and went their way ; but Adonijah arose and laid hold on the horns of the altar.

And it was told Solomon, " Behold, Adonijah feareth the king, for he hath laid hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let King Solomon swear unto me this day that he will not slay me with the sword."

Solomon said, " If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth ; but if wickedness be found in him he shall die."

So King Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he bowed himself before the king, and the king said unto him, " Go now to thine own house."

So Solomon reigned in the room of David, his father. And David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

These are the last words of David, the son of Jesse :—

" David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

" The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue.

" The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me.

" He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

" And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, as a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

THE STORY OF AHAB AND HIS HOUSE

ZIMRI and Omri were chief captains of the host to Elah, king of Israel, and the king sent them against Gibbethon of the Philistines, but he himself remained in Tirzah. There Zimri slew him as he was drinking in his steward's house, and made himself king in his stead. But after seven days, Omri and the army that was at Gibbethon marched against Zimri, and besieged him in the palace. Then Zimri, seeing that there was no hope of escape, burnt himself and all that he had in the palace. Thus did Omri become king, and he reigned twelve years. And when he was dead, Ahab, his son, reigned in his stead.

This Ahab made alliance with Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and married Jezebel, his daughter.¹ This was the beginning of great evils. For whereas Jeroboam and the kings that came after him had caused Israel to sin against the Lord by worshipping the calves that had been set up in Bethel and in Dan, Ahab constrained his people to transgress far more grievously, even by following Baal and Ashtaroth. This he did at

¹ Very likely the motive of this alliance was the growing power of the Assyrians. But there was a natural disposition between the two nations to make arrangements for mutual support, if only religious obstacles could be removed. Thus Solomon had friendly relations with Hiram. We may compare also the narrative in the Acts (xii. 20), where we see the anxiety of the Phenicians to be on friendly terms with their Jewish neighbours.

the bidding of Jezebel, his wife, being ruled in all things by her. And not only did he worship these false gods with much pomp and splendour,¹ but he persecuted them that were still faithful to Jehovah. For the armed messengers of the queen went through the land, throwing down the altars of the Lord, and slaying all such as would not bow the knee to Baal. Against the prophets of Jehovah did Ahab and Jezebel, his wife, rage especially. Many were killed with the sword, and they that escaped were content to hide themselves in caves and dens of the earth. Yet there were some that were found faithful even in the king's court; of such was Obadiah, the king's steward, who took a hundred of the Lord's prophets and hid them in two caves, fifty in each, and fed them there.

Then the Lord sent Elijah of Tishbi, in the land of Gilead, to King Ahab. Elijah stood before him as he sat on his throne, and said, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."² And when he had said this he turned away and was seen no more. But when there had been drought for a long time, and the famine began to be sore in the land, Ahab bethought him of the man that had denounced this judgment against him and his people. And he sent throughout all the land of Israel, and to all the nations round about, seeking for him. To whomsoever he sent he made him swear that Elijah was not with him; but still he could not find him. But Elijah dwelt by the Brook Cherith, where the ravens fed him with bread and flesh; and when the brook failed for the drought,

¹ Thus we hear of four hundred and fifty priests of Baal that were fed at Jezebel's table, and of four hundred priests of the grove.

² There was a peculiar propriety in this kind of visitation, for the false gods for whom Jehovah had been forsaken were supposed to be peculiarly powers of nature.

he sojourned with a widow-woman of Sarepta, that belonged to Sidon; and the Lord, for his sake, so ordered it that the woman's cruse of oil and barrel of meal failed not till the famine was ended.

At the end of the third year the Lord said to Elijah, "Go, show thyself to Ahab, and I will send



ELIJAH FED BY THE RAVENS.

rain upon the earth." Now about this time King Ahab said to Obadiah, his steward, "Go throughout the land to all fountains of water and brooks. Peradventure we may find grass to save such of the horses and mules as are left." So they divided the land between them—Ahab went one way and Obadiah went another. And as Obadiah was on his way, Elijah met him; and Obadiah knew him for the prophet that had stood before Ahab, and he fell on his face before him, and

said, "Art thou that my lord Elijah?" And he answered, "I am; go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here." Then Obadiah said, "How have I sinned, that thou wouldst give Ahab occasion to slay me? There is no nation or kingdom whither he hath not sent to seek thee; and now thou biddest me say, Behold, Elijah is here. But so soon as I shall have gone from thee, the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and when I shall have told Ahab, and he cannot find thee, then will he slay me. Truly I have served the Lord from my youth. Doth not my lord know how I saved a hundred men when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord?" Elijah answered, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to Ahab to-day." So Obadiah told Ahab, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. And when Ahab saw him he said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" But Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house. Now gather to Mount Carmel all the prophets of Baal, and the prophets of the groves; I will be there also. Let all the people also be gathered to the same place, that they may judge between us." And Ahab did so; and all the people stood round on a level place on the top of Mount Carmel. And Elijah and the prophets of Baal stood in the midst—he by himself and they by themselves. Then Elijah said to the king and the people, "Let the prophets of Baal furnish now two bullocks—for they are four hundred and fifty men, and I but one—and let them cut their bullock in pieces, and put his flesh on their altar, but put no fire under; and I will do the same with my bullock. They shall call on the name of their god, and I will call on the name of mine; and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God." And all the people said, "It is well spoken."

Then the prophets of Baal took their bullock and put it on the altar which they had built. And they called on Baal from morning until noon, crying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice, nor any that answered; and they leaped upon the altar. And when it was noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud; for either he meditateth or is busy with other things, and doth not hear you; or he is on a journey; or, perchance, he is asleep, and must be awaked." So they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them. Thus they did till it was the time of offering the evening sacrifice;¹ but there was no voice, nor any that answered or regarded.

Then Elijah built again the altar of Jehovah that was in the place, and had been broken down. With twelve stones he built it, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. Round about it he made a trench as great as would contain two measures of seed;² and he put the wood in order on the altar, and laid the pieces of the bullock on the altar, and commanded that water should be poured upon it three times, till the whole was drenched through and through, and even the trench filled with water. And at the time of the evening sacrifice he prayed, and said, "Jehovah, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hear me. Jehovah, hear me this day in fire, and let all the people know that Thou art Jehovah, the God of this Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and through Thee have done all these things. Hear me, O Jehovah; hear me, and let this people know that Thou, Jehovah, art the God, and that Thou hast turned their hearts back again."

And when he had done speaking, the fire of the

¹ This would be three o'clock in the afternoon.

² Two measures of seed would be equivalent to six gallons.

Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw it they fell on their faces, and said, "Jehovah is the God; Jehovah is the God."

Then Elijah said to the people, "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." So they took



THE SLAYING OF THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

them, and Elijah slew them by the Brook Kishon. That night there was a great rain; and Ahab returned to Jezreel, and Elijah ran before his chariot, even till he came to the gates of Jezreel.

After these things Benhadad, king of Syria, gathered all his host together. Two-and-thirty kings had he with him that were tributary to him, and many horses and chariots. And he came up against Samaria, and

besieged it. Then he sent messengers to Ahab, who said to him, "All thy silver and gold is mine, and thy wives and thy children." And Ahab answered, "It is so; they are the king's." Then Benhadad sent again, saying, "It is not enough that thou shouldst deliver to me thy silver and gold, and thy wives, and thy children. My servants shall search thine house and the houses of thy servants, and whatsoever they shall find that is pleasant in their eyes, that they shall take."

Then Ahab called the elders of the people, and said to them, "Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief. He sent for my silver and gold, and my wives, and my children, and I refused them not; and now he demandeth all that shall please him and his servants throughout the whole land." Then the elders said, "Consent not to his demand." So Ahab said to the messengers of Benhadad, "Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first, that I will do; but this I may not do."

When Benhadad heard this he sent again, saying, "The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria suffice for handfuls to the people that follow me."

But Ahab answered, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that taketh it off."

Then Benhadad bade his servants set his army in array, and they did so.

After this there came a prophet to Ahab, who said, "Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into thine hand."

Ahab said, "By whom?" He said, "By the servants of the princes." Then Ahab numbered the servants, two hundred and twenty and two; and all the people were seven thousand. At noon the servants went forth, while Benhadad and the kings were drinking

themselves drunk in the pavilions. And when he heard of their coming forth he said, "Whether they be come for peace or for war, take them alive." But the servants and the army that followed them fell upon the Syrians, and slew every one his man ; and Israel pursued, and Benhadad escaped with the horsemen, but his host was smitten with a great slaughter.

The next year the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "The gods of Israel are gods of the hills ; therefore they were stronger than we ; let us fight against them in the plain, and we shall be stronger than they ; also put captains to command the host in the place of the kings."

So the next year at the same time the Syrians came up against the land of Israel, and pitched their camp in Aphek, that is on the east side of Jordan. And Ahab went out to meet them. The Syrians filled all the land, but the children of Israel were like two flocks of kids. For seven days the two hosts abode in their camps ; on the seventh day they joined battle, and Israel smote the Syrians with a great slaughter. But Benhadad fled to Aphek, and hid himself in an inner chamber. His servants said to him, "We have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings. Let us put sackcloth on our loins and ropes round our necks, and go out to the king of Israel ; peradventure he will spare thy life." And they did so, and went out to King Ahab, and said, "Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live." Ahab answered, "Is he yet alive? He is my brother." Now the men watched diligently for what he should say, and when he said, "He is my brother," they caught up the word, and said, "Thy brother Benhadad." Ahab said, "Go ye and bring him." So Benhadad came forth, and Ahab made him ride in his chariot. And Benhadad

said, "The cities that my father took from thy father I will restore, and thou shalt make streets¹ for thyself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Then they made a treaty of peace, and Ahab sent him away.

As the king came back to Jezreel a prophet cried unto him from the roadside (the man had disguised himself, so that none should know that he was a prophet). He said, "Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and one brought me a prisoner whom he had taken, and said, Keep this man ; if by any means he be missing, thy life shall be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. But as I was busy here and there, the man was gone." The king said, "So shall thy judgment be ; thou hast thyself decided it." Then the prophet showed himself from under his disguise, and said to the king, "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go a man who should have been destroyed, therefore thy life shall be for his life, and thy people for his people."

And Ahab went to his house heavy and displeased because of the word that he had heard.

Now Ahab coveted a vineyard that was hard by his palace in Jezreel, for he was minded to make of it a garden of herbs ; and he said to him whose vineyard it was, a certain Naboth, "Give me thy vineyard, and I will give thee a better vineyard for it ; or else, if thou wilt, I will give thee the worth of it in money." But Naboth said, "God forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee !" And Ahab, when he heard this, was much displeased, so that he lay down on his bed and would eat nothing. But Jezebel, his wife, when she had heard what ailed him, said, "Arise, eat and drink and be merry ; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth." So she sent letters to the elders of

¹ A Hebrew quarter.

Jezreel, that they should suborn false witnesses against Naboth, who should testify against him that he had blasphemed God and the king. And the elders did so. They proclaimed a fast, and called an assembly, and because Naboth was a great man in Jezreel, they set him on high among the people. And as he sat, the false witnesses came, and testified against him. Then sentence was pronounced, and he was carried out of the city, and was stoned with stones, he and his sons with him.

When Jezebel heard that Naboth was dead, she said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, which he refused to give thee for money; for he is not alive, but dead."

So Ahab went down to take possession, with Jehu and Bidkar, his captains, riding behind him. But when he was come to the place, lo! Elijah, the prophet of Tishbi, stood before him, and said to him, "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" And Ahab said to Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" And Elijah answered, "I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do evil in the sight of the Lord. Therefore hear the word of the Lord. In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood. And I will utterly destroy thy house; and Jezebel the dogs shall eat by the wall of Jezreel."

But Ahab, when he heard these words, humbled himself, and the sentence against him was delayed for a while.

Now Benhadad, the king of Syria, had covenanted to restore the cities which his father had taken from Omri, of which cities Ramoth in the land of Gilead was one; and when three years had passed, and the king of Syria delayed to do the thing which he had promised, it came into Ahab's heart to make war upon him. And when Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, came to

Samaria—for Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram had taken to wife Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab—Ahab said to him, "Wilt thou go up with me to battle at Ramoth-in-Gilead?" Jehoshaphat answered, "I am as thou art; my people as thy people; my horses as thy horses." Only he would have the king inquire of the Lord whether they should do well to go up. So Ahab called together the prophets of Baal, about four hundred men, and inquired of them, "Shall I go up to Ramoth-in-Gilead, or shall I forbear?" And they answered with one voice, "Go up, and the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not a prophet of Jehovah by whom we may inquire?" And Ahab said, "There is one such, Micaiah, the son of Imlah; but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me but evil." Nevertheless he sent an officer to bring Micaiah, the son of Imlah, in haste. Then the two kings sat each in his robes upon his throne in the open space before the gate of Samaria,¹ and the prophets prophesied before them. Then the four hundred cried again as one man, "Go up to Ramoth-in-Gilead, and prosper." And one of them, Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, made him horns of iron, and said, "With these shalt thou push the Syrians, till thou have consumed them."

Now the officer that went to call Micaiah said to him, "Behold, now all the prophets prophesy good to the king with one voice. Let thy word, I pray thee, be as theirs." But Micaiah said, "As Jehovah liveth, what Jehovah saith to me, that will I speak." So he came to the king. And the king said, "Micaiah, shall we go up to Ramoth, or shall we forbear?" And Micaiah

¹ As Dean Stanley remarks, it was an unprecedented sight. Only once again (see p. 216) did the heads of the two Hebrew kingdoms meet as friends.

said, "Go up, and the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." But Ahab perceived that he mocked him, and said, "How many times shall I adjure thee that thou speak nothing but that which is true in the name of Jehovah?" Then Micaiah said, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have no shepherd; and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace."

Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

Then Micaiah said to the king, "Hear thou the word of Jehovah. I saw Jehovah sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on the right hand and on the left. And Jehovah said, Who shall deceive Ahab, so that he shall go up to Ramoth-gilead, and fall there? And some spake one thing and some another. Then there came forth a spirit, and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will deceive him. And Jehovah said, Wherewith? And the spirit said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And Jehovah said, Thou shalt deceive him and prevail also; go forth, and do so. Now, therefore, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee." But Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, smote Micaiah on the cheek, saying, "Which way went the lying spirit from me to speak unto thee?" Micaiah answered, "Behold, thou shalt know in that day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself." Then Ahab commanded that they should take Micaiah to the governor of the city, and should say to him, "Thus saith the king, Put this fellow into the prison, and feed him with the bread of affliction, and with the water of affliction, till I come again in

peace." But Micaiah said, "If thou come at all in peace, then the Lord hath not spoken by me." And turning to the people he cried aloud, "Hear, O people, every one of you."

So Ahab went up to Ramoth-in-Gilead, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, with him. And Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself; but put



THE DEATH OF AHAB.

thou on thy robes." So he disguised himself and entered into the battle. Now the king of Syria had commanded his captains that they should fight neither with small nor great, but only with the king of Israel. When therefore they saw Jehoshaphat in his robes they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out. So they knew that he was not the king of Israel, and left pursuing him. Nevertheless Ahab

did not escape the sentence that had been pronounced against him ; for a certain man,¹ shooting an arrow from his bow at random, smote him where the helmet is joined to the breastplate. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn and carry me out of the battle." Then the battle waxed fiercer and fiercer all that day ; and the king, that his host might make head against the Syrians, bade his servants prop him up in his chariot. At even he died ; and about the going down of the sun there went this proclamation throughout the host, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country."

They brought the body of the king to Samaria, and buried him there. His chariot and his armour they washed in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked his blood.

Ahaziah, son of Ahab, reigned in his father's stead ; and when he died, having fallen from an upper window in his palace, because he had no son his brother Jehoram became king. And in the twelfth year of Jehoram, Elisha the prophet called a certain young man of the school of the prophets, and said unto him, "Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-in-Gilead ; and when thou comest thither look out Jehu, the son of Nimshi, and take him apart from his brethren into an inner chamber. Then take the box of oil, and pour it upon his head, and say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not."

This Elisha did that he might fulfil the commandment which the Lord gave to Elijah, his master, in Horeb, the mount of God, saying, "Jehu, the son of Nimshi, shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel."

Now the host of Israel was encamped before Ramoth-

¹ Afterwards said to have been Naaman.

in-Gilead, Jehu being its chief captain ; but King Jehoram had gone back to Jezreel to be healed of the wounds which he had received in battle with the Syrians. The man came to Ramoth, and, behold, the captains of the host were sitting together. And he said, "I have an errand to thee, O captain." And Jehu said, "Unto which of all of us?" And the young man said, "To thee, O captain." Then Jehu arose, and went into the house ; and the young man poured the oil on his head, and said, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over Israel, and thou shalt destroy the house of Ahab." Then he opened the door and fled.

Then Jehu came forth from the chamber to where the captains were sitting. And they asked him, saying, "Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow unto thee?" But he, supposing that they were concerned in the matter, said, "Ye know the man, and also his message." They said, "It is false. Tell us now." Then Jehu said : "The man spake thus : The Lord hath anointed thee king over Israel." Then the captains took every man his cloak and put them under Jehu's feet at the top of the staircase, and blew with trumpets, and made proclamation, "Jehu is king."

Then Jehu said, "If this be your purpose, take care that none escape to tell the matter in Jezreel." And they did so ; but Jehu rode to Jezreel with all speed in his chariot.

Now there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and the man said, "I see a company." Then said the king, "Send a horseman to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?" So there rode a horseman to meet them. And when the man came to them he said, "Thus saith the king, Is it peace?" Jehu answered, "What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me." The watchman said, "The messenger came to

them, but he cometh not again." So the king sent a second messenger, and it happened to him as to the first. The watchman said, "The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again; and the driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously." Then said the king, "Make ready my chariot." So they made ready his chariot, and he went forth to meet Jehu; and Ahaziah, king of Judah, went with him, for Ahaziah had come down to see him, because he had been sick. So the two kings went forth, each in his own chariot. Now the place of their meeting was near to the vineyard of Naboth. And when Jehoram met Jehu he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" But Jehu answered, "What peace can there be, so long as the wickedness of thy mother Jezebel is so great?"—for Jezebel ruled the king, her son. Then Jehoram turned his chariot about, crying out, "There is treachery, O Ahaziah." Then Jehu drew his bow with all his might, and smote Jehoram between the shoulders; and the arrow pierced him to the heart, so that he sank down dead in the chariot. Then said Jehu to Bidkar, his captain, "Take up his body, and cast it into the portion of Naboth. Dost thou not remember how, when thou and I rode behind Ahab his father, the Lord laid this sentence upon his house, Surely I have seen the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons; and I will requite thee in this portion, saith the Lord?"

Then Jehu rode into Jezreel. And when he was come thither Jezebel adorned herself, and painted her face—for she knew that her son was dead, and that she must herself die—and as Jehu passed by, she looked out from a window, and cried, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" Jehu lifted up his face to the window, and cried, "Who is on my side? who?" And there looked out to him from one window two of the

servants of the women's chambers, and from another three. He said to them, "Throw her down." And they threw her down ; and her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses ; and he trampled her under the feet of the horses.

And when he was come in, he sat down to eat and



THE END OF JEZEBEL.

drink. Afterwards he said, "Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her ; for she was a king's daughter." But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of the hands. When Jehu heard this, he said, "Now is fulfilled that which the Lord spake by the mouth of Elijah, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel. For her carcase shall be as dung upon the face of the earth, so that they shall not say, *This is Jezebel.*"

THE STORY OF JEREMIAH THE PROPHET

JEREMIAH, the son of Hilkiah, was of the house of Aaron, and he was born in Anathoth, which was a city that belonged to the priests in the land of Benjamin. In the evil days of Manasseh he was born, and in the twelfth year¹ of Josiah he was called by the Lord to be a prophet. Now in the eighteenth year of his reign King Josiah made a great reformation in the land. First he repaired the places that were broken down in the house of the Lord; for the house had suffered great damage in the days of Amon his father, and of his grandfather Manasseh. And while they repaired the house, it came to pass that they found a book of the law. This book Hilkiah the priest gave to Shaphan the scribe, and Shaphan gave it to the king. When the king read it he was greatly dismayed, seeing how great were the sins which his people had committed against the Lord, and how grievous were the judgments which were written in the law against them that did such things. So he sent Hilkiah and Shaphan, and others with them, to inquire of Huldah the prophetess. And Huldah said, "Tell the man that sent you, Thus saith the Lord, I will bring evil upon this place and upon its inhabitants, even all that is written in the book

¹ Josiah came to the throne in 638 B.C., being then eight years of age. Jeremiah may have been born about 650 B.C.

which the king hath read ; because they have forsaken Me and followed strange gods. But to the king of Judah say, Because thou hast humbled thyself before Me, thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon the land."

Nevertheless Josiah called together all Judah and Jerusalem, and read in their ears all that was written in the book, and he made a covenant that he would keep the whole law of the Lord, and the people agreed thereto. After this he put away all the idolatries that were in the land. And when he had done this he kept a great passover to the Lord, greater than any of the kings that were before him had made. But the heart of the people was still to do evil, and Jeremiah the prophet knew that it was so.

For twelve years Josiah reigned in peace, doing judgment and justice, and ruling in the fear of God ; and Jeremiah was one of his chief counsellors. But in the thirtieth year of his reign Pharaoh-Necho came up out of Egypt to do battle with the king of Assyria at Carchemish that is on the river Euphrates ; and Josiah went out to meet him. Necho sent messengers to him, saying, "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? Not against thee have I come out this day ; I go to fight with the Assyrians. This the Lord commanded me by a dream to do. Hinder not thou the word of the Lord." But Josiah turned not away, for he had steadfastly resolved to fight. So Necho met him in the valley of Megiddo, and slew him. Then the servants of Josiah carried back his dead body to Jerusalem ; and all the people mourned for him ; nor did any mourn more truly than Jeremiah the prophet.

The people made Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, king in the room of Josiah his father. But he reigned for three

months only. For at the end of that time Pharaoh-Necho came back from fighting with the Assyrians, and put down Jehoahaz from his place, and carried him into Egypt, and made Eliakim, his brother, king in his stead, changing his name to Jehoiakim.¹

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, at one



THE MISSION OF JEREMIAH.

of the great feasts, when the people came up from all the cities of Judah, Jeremiah stood in the court of the Lord's house, and cried to all the people that had come up from their cities to worship at Jerusalem, "Thus saith the Lord, If ye will not hearken unto Me to walk in My law which I have set before you, then I will

¹ The difference of the names is the difference between the two names of God. It was changed from "Whom God will set up" to "Whom Jehovah will set up."

make this house like Shiloh,¹ and this city a curse to all the nations of the earth."

When Jeremiah had said these words the priests and the prophets—for there were false prophets in those days—and all the people laid hold upon him, crying, "Thou shalt surely die." And there was a great tumult. Thereupon the princes of Judah came from the king's house unto the house of the Lord, and sat down in the new gate. And the priests and prophets accused Jeremiah before them, saying, "This man is worthy to die, for he hath prophesied against this place, as ye have heard with your own ears." Then said Jeremiah to all the princes and all the people, "The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words that ye have heard. Now, therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent Him of the evil which He hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold I am in your hands; do with me as seemeth meet and good to you. But know for certain that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for the Lord hath sent me to speak all these words in your ears."

Then the princes and the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man is not worthy of death; for he hath spoken in the name of the Lord our God." Also certain of the elders said, "Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of King Hezekiah, saying to all the people of Israel, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps. Did Hezekiah and the people put him to death? Did they not beseech the Lord so that

¹ Shiloh had been, but had ceased to be, the seat of the nation's worship.

He repented Him of the evil which He had pronounced against them?"

And Ahikam, the son of Shaphan the scribe, stood by Jeremiah the prophet, so that he was not delivered into the hands of those who would have put him to death.

But there was a certain Urijah, the son of Shemaiah, who prophesied against the house of God and against the city the same things that Jeremiah prophesied. And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his great men, heard his words he sought to put him to death. But when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled into the land of Egypt. Then Jehoiakim the king sent certain men into Egypt, and they brought Urijah from thence, and slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body among the graves of the common people that were in the valley of Hinnom.

Now in this same first year of Jehoiakim, Nabopolassar, who was general to the king of Assyria, rebelled against his master, and had made himself king of Babylon, and taken the great city of Nineveh; and in his third year the son of King Nabopolassar, Nebuchadrezzar¹ by name, conquered Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, by Carchemish that is on the river Euphrates. And in the eighth year of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadrezzar came up against Jerusalem, for he knew that the king's heart turned to the king of Egypt, that had set him upon his throne; but Jehoiakim was afraid, because the Egyptians could not help him, and he went up to meet the king of Babylon, and submitted himself to him.

But before he went up, there arose a great enmity between him and the prophet Jeremiah. The king proclaimed a fast for all the people, and many came to

¹ The first name means "Nebo, protect the son"; the second, "Nebo, protect the crown."

Jerusalem, both for the fast's sake and because the Chaldean was in the land. Then Jeremiah called Baruch, who was wont to write down the prophecies at his mouth, and bade him write in the roll of a book all the words that he had spoken against Judah and Jerusalem from the first until that day.¹ So Baruch wrote them down. Jeremiah said, "I cannot go into the house of the Lord. Go thou and read the words that thou hast written at my mouth in the ears of all the people that are gathered upon the fasting day." So Baruch went to the house of the Lord, and Gemariah, son of Shaphan the scribe,² bade him come into his chamber, that was hard by the temple. There did Baruch read the words that he had written down at the mouth of Jeremiah. And when Michaiah, Gemariah's son, heard these words he went to the princes where they sat in the scribe's chamber, in the king's palace, and told them the words that he had heard. Then the princes sent Jehudi to Baruch with this message: "Come to us, and bring the roll of the book which thou hast been reading in the ears of the people." So Baruch came and read it to the princes. And when they heard the words, they were sore afraid, and said to one another, "The king must know of these things." And they asked Baruch, "How didst thou write these words?" Baruch answered, "He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book." Then said the princes to him, "Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be." So Baruch departed, and he and Jeremiah hid themselves. Meanwhile the princes went to the king's palace; but the roll they took not with

¹ A period of about twenty-six years.

² And so brother to Ahikam, of whom we hear as having protected the prophet on a former occasion.

them, but laid it by in the chamber of Elishama. But the words they told to the king. Now it was winter-time, and the king sat in the winter apartment of the palace, and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. The king bade Jehudi bring the roll and read it in his ears. So Jehudi read it, and when he had read three or four columns the king stretched out his hand and took the roll from the reader, and cut it into pieces with a penknife that he had in his hand, and threw the pieces into a fire that was burning on the hearth, till the whole roll was consumed. So wickedly did the king, yet none were afraid or rent their garments. Nevertheless three of the princes made intercession to the king that he would not destroy the roll. But he would not listen to them. Rather he sent three of his officers to seize Jeremiah and Baruch ; but they could not find them, for the Lord hid them. While they were thus hidden the prophet commanded his scribe to take another roll, and to write in it all the words that were written in the former roll, and to add to them many other like words.

In the eleventh year of his reign Jehoiakim rebelled against the king of Babylon, and the land was overrun with bands of Chaldees, and of Syrians, and of Moabites, and of the children of Ammon. Nor could the Egyptians give any help, for the king of Babylon had taken from them all the land that was between the Nile and the Euphrates. So the people of the land flocked into Jerusalem, and among them the Rechabites, who were of the house of Heber the Kenite. And when Jeremiah saw that the Rechabites had come into the city, he thought to speak to his own countrymen a parable concerning them.

Now the Rechabites followed the way of life which had been laid upon them by one of their house in time

past, Jonadab,¹ the son of Rechab. And Jeremiah, having it in his mind to try their constancy, sent for them to one of the chambers of the temple, and setting before them cups of wine, bade them drink. But they said, "Not so, for Jonadab, our father, commanded us that we should not drink wine, nor own land, nor dwell in a city. We have indeed come into the city for fear of the Chaldeans, but land we have none, and wine we will not drink." Then said the prophet to his countrymen, "Thus saith the Lord, The word of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none. But I have sent unto you prophets, saying, Return from your evil way, and serve not other gods, and ye shall dwell in the land, and ye would not. Therefore Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever; but upon Judah, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, will I bring all the evil that I have pronounced upon them."

After these things King Jehoiakim died—a covetous man, and given to oppression and violence, who laid great burdens upon his people that he might build himself splendid palaces and live in luxury.² How he

¹ We hear of Jonadab, it will be remembered, in the story of the revolution which overthrew the dynasty of Ahab, and with it the Baal-worship, and raised Jehu to the throne. This was about a century and a half earlier in the history.

² See the contrast which Jeremiah draws between Josiah, the good king, and his selfish and tyrannical son in chap. xxii.: "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers . . . and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him. . . . But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it" (vv. 13-17.) This passage is particularly noteworthy as containing the only reference in all the prophecies of Jeremiah to the good King Josiah.

died is not told for certain. Some say that the king of Babylon caused him to be slain, and some that his own servants conspired against him, and slew him. They say also that his dead body was cast out of the city and suffered to lie unburied, but that afterwards it was taken up and buried in the sepulchre of the kings.¹

After Jehoiakim was dead, his son Jehoiachim was made king, but he reigned for a hundred days only ; for Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, sent an army against Jerusalem to besiege it. And while they were besieging it, he himself came. Then Jehoiachim the king, and his mother Nehushta,² and his servants and princes and officers went out to meet him. And Nebuchadrezzar took him and his family, and the nobles of the land, and seven thousand of the best of his soldiers, and a thousand craftsmen, and carried them away to the land of Babylon. He left none but the poorest in the land. Also he took all the treasures out of the temple, and out of the king's palace, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon had made. And he made Mattaniah, that was son of Josiah, king, and changed his name to Zedekiah.³

These were evil days for Jerusalem, for the best of the princes had been carried away to Babylon, and the king, though he honoured Jeremiah as a prophet, was weak of purpose, and yielded to evil counsellors. Now

¹ The writer of the Kings (2 Kings xxiv. 6) says only, "So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers." In the Chronicles we read that Nebuchadrezzar "put him in fetters to carry him to Babylon," the Septuagint adding that he was "buried in the garden of Uzza." We may, perhaps, conjecture that he died in captivity, but before being taken to Babylon, or was executed, that his remains were at first treated by his captors with contempt, but afterwards received decent burial.

² It is to be observed that Nehushta was the daughter of Elnathan, one of the men whom Jehoiakim had sent into Egypt to kidnap the prophet Urijah.

³ Mattaniah means "Gift of Jehovah," Zedekiah "Righteousness of Jehovah."

the counsel of Jeremiah had been that the king should put no trust in Egypt, but should be loyal and obedient to the king of Babylon. And so at the first Zedekiah did, for in the fourth year of his reign he himself went to Babylon to pay homage and swear allegiance. But there were many about him who gave other advice, and would have him make alliance with Egypt, and this the more vehemently because there was now another king in Egypt, Hophra¹ by name, and men said that he was wise and brave.

So it came to pass that in his ninth² year King Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. With him Moab and Ammon on the east, and Edom in the south, and Philistia on the west made alliance. Also he sent ambassadors to the king of Egypt, and he also promised to help him. Now Nebuchadrezzar was besieging Tyre in those days, but when he heard that the Jews and all the nations round about had rebelled against him, he came up with all his host. When he came on his march to the place where the roads divided—the one leading to Rabbath, the chief city of the children of Ammon, and the other to Jerusalem—he used divination by arrows³ and by sacrifices that he might know which way he should go. And when the signs seemed to show that he should go against Jerusalem, he went up against the city. At first he ravaged all the land of Judah and took the cities, save only Lachish and Azekah. Afterwards he came to Jerusalem, and threw up mounds against it, and brought against it towers and battering-rams and siege-engines, and the slingers and archers went about it, and drove the defenders from off the walls.

¹ The Apries of Herodotus.

² 589 B.C.

³ By arrows or rods. Probably they were made to stand upright and then suffered to fall, the answer being given by the manner of their falling.

But after a while there came news to the king of Babylon that the king of Egypt had come out against him with a great army. Therefore he left besieging Jerusalem, and went out to meet the Egyptians. There was then great joy and confidence among the counselors of the king, for they said, "The Babylonians are gone, and we are delivered." But Jeremiah the prophet was not so deceived, for when the king sent to inquire of him, he said, "Thus saith the Lord, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to their own land, and the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and burn it with fire."

After these things Jeremiah would have gone away from Jerusalem to dwell in his own place in the land of Benjamin, apart from the strife of men. But as he was going out from the gate that leadeth to the land of Benjamin, one of the captains laid hold of him and said, "Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans." Jeremiah answered, "It is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans." Nevertheless the officer brought him to the princes, and the princes were wroth with him, and scourged him, and put him in prison, in the house that was Jonathan the scribe's; for they had made this into a prison. There Jeremiah remained, shut up in a dungeon, for many days. Not only did the princes do this wrong, but all the bondservants whom they had set free, according to the law of Moses, they made slaves again.

But before many days had passed, there befell what Jeremiah had prophesied, for the Egyptians dared not abide the coming of the king of Babylon, but broke up their camp, and returned to their own land. And the Chaldeans came again, and besieged Jerusalem as at the first.

Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah, where he lay in the dungeon of the prison, and asked him, "Is there any

word from the Lord?" But he did it secretly, for fear of the princes. Jeremiah answered, "There is: thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." Also Jeremiah said, "What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against the people, that ye have put me in prison? Where now are your prophets who prophesied, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come up against this city? But now, my lord the king, send me not back to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there." So Zedekiah commanded that he should be put into the court of the guard, which was hard by his own palace, and that they should give him a portion of bread out of the bakers' street, so long as there should be any food left in the city.

While he lay in the court of the guard there came to him Hanameel, that was his uncle's son, and said, "Buy of me the field that is mine in Anathoth." And Jeremiah bought it of him, paying for it seventeen shekels of silver.¹ And when he had signed the writing and taken evidence of the purchase according to law and custom, he gave the deeds to Baruch in the presence of Hanameel and of the witnesses, in the presence of all the Jews that sat in the court, and said, "Take this evidence of the purchase, and put it in an earthen vessel, that it may continue safe for many days; for thus saith the Lord, Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."

Nevertheless Jeremiah ceased not to proclaim to all that heard him, "He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall save his life. For thus saith the Lord, This city shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon."

When the princes heard that he spake in this

¹ This would be about two or three pounds.

manner, thinking that he would take away all courage out of the heart of the people, they went to the king and said, "We beseech thee, let this man be put to death ; for by these words he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in the city, and the hands of all the people ; for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but their hurt."

Zedekiah said, "Behold, he is in your hand. The king cannot do anything against you."

Then the princes took Jeremiah and cast him into a cistern. There was no water in the cistern, but much mire ; and Jeremiah sank in the mire.

When Ebed-melech the Ethiopian heard what the princes had done to Jeremiah, he went to the king, where he sat in the gate of Benjamin,¹ and said to him, "My lord the king, these men have done evil in that they have cast Jeremiah the prophet into the dungeon ; for he is like to die there of hunger." Zedekiah said, "Take three men with thee and draw up Jeremiah out of the dungeon before he die." So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and also took old clouts and rags, and let them down with cords to Jeremiah where he lay in the dungeon. And he said to Jeremiah, "Put these things in thine armholes under the cords." And Jeremiah did so ; then they drew up Jeremiah out of the dungeon. And he was put again in the court of the guard.

After this the king sent for Jeremiah, and said to him, "I will ask thee a thing ; hide nothing from me." Jeremiah answered, "If I declare the truth, wilt thou not put me to death ? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou follow it ?" Then the king sware to Jeremiah, saying, "As the Lord liveth, I will not put thee to

¹ It seems probable that the assault of the besieging army was fiercest at this point.

death, nor will I deliver thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life." Then said Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord, If thou wilt go forth to the king of Babylon, thou and thy house shall be safe, and this city shall not be burned with fire. But if thou wilt not go forth, this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and thou shalt not escape." Zedekiah answered, "I am afraid of the Jews that have before this gone over, lest the Chaldeans deliver me into the hands of them, and these should mock me." The prophet said, "The Chaldeans will not deliver thee to them. Obey, I pray thee, the voice of the Lord. Go forth to the king of Babylon, for otherwise thou shalt not escape thyself, and thou shalt destroy this people also." But the king was afraid to follow the prophet's counsel. "Let no man," he said, "hear that I have been talking with thee about these things. If any man ask thee what thou hast been saying, say that thou hast been making petition to me that thou shouldst not be sent back to the scribe's house." This Jeremiah did, and he abode in the court of the guard till the day wherein the city was taken.

Now the city had been besieged for nearly a year and six months,¹ and the food had long since failed. "They that were brought up in scarlet embraced dung-hills." "The tongue of the sucking child clave to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the young children asked for bread, and no man broke it unto them." Nay, there was worse than this, "the hands of the pitiful women had sodden their own children."² And then it came to pass that the defenders, wasted with hunger, could not defend their city any more. About midnight

¹ The exact time during which the siege lasted was a year, five months, and twenty-seven days.

² Lam. iv. 4, 5, 10. The book abounds with pictures of the terrible condition of the city before and after its capture.

on the ninth day of the fourth month the Chaldeans broke in by the north wall;¹ and at the same time the king and his men of war fled out of the south gate towards Jordan, for they hoped that they might escape to the mountains. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after them, and overtook them in the plains of Jericho.

Then the Chaldeans carried the prisoners to Nebuchadrezzar at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, which is by Euphrates. Then the king gave judgment upon him. He slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes; and all the nobles of Judah he slew; and Zedekiah's eyes he put out, because he had broken his oath that he swore to be faithful to the king of Babylon.

But Nebuchadrezzar gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan, who was captain of the guard, saying, "Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee." But all the houses of the city and the temple and the king's palace Nebuzar-adan burnt with fire, and all the vessels that still remained in the temple were carried away to Babylon. The people also that were left after the siege were carried away. Only the poorest of the land were left to till the soil.

Then the captain of the guard said to Jeremiah, "Behold I loose thee this day from the chains that were upon thine hand. If it seem good to thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee. But if it seem ill unto thee to come with me to Babylon, forbear. Behold, all the land is before thee; whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, go thither." Now the king had made Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan the scribe, to be

¹ This would be early in July. The day was afterwards observed as a fast.

governor of the people that were left. So Nebuzar-adan said to Jeremiah, "Go if thou wilt to Gedaliah, or elsewhere, if it please thee better." And he gave him victuals and money, and let him go. Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah to Mizpah, where he dwelt, and he abode with the people that were left in the land.

And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the



JEREMIAH MOURNING OVER JERUSALEM.

son of Kareah, and others of the nobles, came to Gedaliah. And he swore to them that they might dwell safely in the land if they would be obedient to the king of Babylon. "As for me," he said, "I dwell at Mizpah, as the king commanded me; but go ye to your cities and dwell there, and gather in the summer fruits and the oil and the wine. Likewise all the Jews that were in Moab and among the Ammonites, and in

the other countries round about, when they heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah, and that he had put over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, they came to Mizpah, and gathered the fruits of the land in abundance.

But Johanan said to Gedaliah, "Knowest thou not that Baalis, king of the Ammonites, hath sent Ishmael to slay thee?" But Gedaliah believed him not. And Johanan said again, "Let me go, and I will slay Ishmael, and no man shall know it. Wherefore should he slay thee, that all the remnant of the Jews that are gathered to thee should be scattered again?" But Gedaliah said, "Thou shalt not do this thing. Thou speakest falsely of Ishmael."

In the seventh month Ishmael, and ten princes with him, came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and ate bread with him. And as they sat at the meal Ishmael and his companions arose and slew Gedaliah, and all the Jews that were with him, and all the Chaldeans that were there, and all the men of war.

On the second day after that he had slain him, while as yet no man knew it, came fourscore men from Shechem and from Shiloh and from Samaria, for there were some in those parts that feared the Lord. They had their heads shaven and their clothes rent, and they had cut themselves with knives, as men that mourned greatly. They came with offerings and incense in their hand to present them at the place where the temple had stood. And Ishmael went out to meet them, making pretence to weep as he went. And he said unto them, "Come and tarry this night with Gedaliah." So the men went, purposing the next day to go on their way to Jerusalem. But when they came into the midst of the city Ishmael and the men that were with him slew them, and cast their dead

bodies into a pit that was in the city. This was a pit¹ which Asa, king of Judah, had digged when he made war with Baasha, the king of Israel, and the pit was filled with the dead bodies of the slain. Ten of the fourscore he slew not, for they said unto him, "Slay us not, for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of honey, and of oil." And Ishmael carried away captive all the remnant of the people that were with Gedaliah, being minded to cross the Jordan into the land of the Ammonites. And Jeremiah the prophet was among the captives.

But when Johanan heard what Ishmael had done, he and all the captains of the forces that were with him pursued after him, and overtook him by the great pool of Gibeon. All the people whom Ishmael had carried away were glad when they saw Johanan. As for Ishmael, he escaped into the land of the Ammonites, and eight men with him, for two were slain.

But Johanan was sore afraid of the wrath of the king of Babylon, and the more because Ishmael, who had slain the Chaldeans, was escaped out of his hand. Therefore he and his company were minded to fly into the land of Egypt. But first they came and dwelt at the habitation of Chimham,² which is by Bethlehem.

While they dwelt at the habitation of Chimham, Johanan and the captains and all the people from the greatest to the least, came to Jeremiah, and said to him, "Pray for us to the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant; for we are left but few out of many, as thou

¹ Possibly this pit was a cistern, made against the contingency of a siege.

² This would seem to mean the *khan* or *caravanseirai* still called after the name of Chimham, the son of Barzillai the Gileadite. It will be remembered ("Story of David") that Barzillai, in refusing for himself the king's offer of maintenance at court, suggested that the royal favour might be transferred to his son Chimham.

seest this day ; pray, therefore, that the Lord may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do." Jeremiah the prophet answered them, "I have heard you ; I will pray unto the Lord your God according to your words ; and whatsoever the Lord shall say to me, that will I declare to you ; I will keep nothing back."

The men answered, "Whether it be good or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God. The Lord be our witness."

For nine days the prophet sought counsel from the Lord, and on the tenth day he called Jóhanan and the captains and all the people to him, and said, "Thus saith the Lord, If ye will abide in this land, it shall be well with you. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, whom ye fear, for I will deliver you out of his hand. But if ye will say, No ; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor lack bread, and there will we dwell ; then it shall come to pass that the sword which ye fear shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine whereof ye are afraid shall follow you thither, and ye shall die in the land of Egypt."

And further the prophet said, "Ye dissembled in your hearts when ye sent me to inquire for you of the Lord, for it was not in your hearts to obey the voice of the Lord, but ye were resolved to go down into Egypt."

And so it was. Jóhanan and the people that were with him said to Jeremiah, "Thou speakest falsely ; the Lord thy God hath not sent thee to say, Go not down into Egypt. It is Baruch that setteth thee on to speak thus, that he may deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans."

Then they took all the people and carried them down into Egypt, and Jeremiah and Baruch with them,

and they came to Tahpanhes. And when they were come thither, Jeremiah took great stones and set them in the mortar of the pavement that was before Pharaoh's palace, and said, "Thus saith the Lord, I will bring hither Nebuchadrezzar, My servant, and he shall spread his royal pavilion upon these stones, and he shall smite the land of Egypt, and burn the houses of the people and the temples of the gods with fire, and afterwards he shall return to his own land in peace."¹

After these things Jeremiah spake again to the Jews that dwelt in the land of Egypt: "Ye know what evil the Lord brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah, because of their wickedness in that they went to burn incense and to serve other gods whom they knew not, nor their fathers. Why then do ye commit this same evil in this land also? Surely the Lord will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as He hath punished Jerusalem by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence."

Thus spake Jeremiah to the people, both men and women, in the great assembly which they had made to the Queen of Heaven.² And the people answered him, "As for this word which thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. We will certainly burn incense to the Queen of Heaven, and pour out drink-offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had food in plenty,

¹ Tahpanhes has been identified as Tell Defenneh in Lower Egypt. Mr. Flinders Petrie discovered here the ruins of a fort built by Psammetichus I., and now called "The palace of the Jew's daughter."

² They continued to worship Jehovah, but added to this worship the cult of strange divinities. This "Queen of Heaven" was either the moon or the planet Venus. "The children gathered wood, the fathers kindled the fire, the women kneaded the dough to make sacrificial cakes . . . as a propitiatory rite to keep off famine and pestilence" (Professor Cheyne's *Jeremiah and his Times*).

and were well off, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings to her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and famine."

Jeremiah answered them again, "Because ye have thus burned incense to strange gods, and because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, nor walked in His law, therefore hath all this evil come upon you as it is this day. Hear therefore the word of the Lord, All the men of Judah that remain in the land of Egypt shall be consumed. And this shall be a sign: I will deliver Pharaoh-Hophra into the hand of his enemies, even as I delivered Zedekiah, king of Judah."

Therefore the people rose upon him in their fury, and stoned him with stones that he died.¹

¹ This account of Jeremiah's death does not rest upon any absolute authority, but may be taken as the most probable and satisfactory of the various legends of his death. Another story relates that he and Baruch were carried away into Babylon by Nebuchadrezzar, when this monarch conquered Egypt. The vision of Judas Maccabæus, as it is related in the Second Book of Maccabees, ought not to be omitted from the "Story of Jeremiah." Judas is represented as having related for the encouragement of his countrymen before a battle what he had seen in a dream. He had seen Onias, who had been high-priest, "a virtuous and good man," holding up his hands and praying for the whole body of the Jews. And as he prayed, "in like manner there appeared a man with gray hairs and exceeding glorious, who was of a wonderful and excellent majesty." "This," said Onias to the dreamer, "is a lover of the brethren, who prayeth much for the people, and for the holy city, to wit, Jeremias, the prophet of God. Whereupon Jeremias, holding forth his right hand, gave to Judas a sword of gold, and in giving it spake thus, 'Take this holy sword, the gift of God, wherewith thou shalt wound the adversaries.'"

THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM

CYRUS, king of Persia, when he had taken the city of Babylon, made proclamation throughout all his kingdom to this purpose: "The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and hath commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem. Let all, therefore, that are of His people go up to Jerusalem and take their part in the building of this house. I command also that their neighbours help them with money and goods and beasts for their journey, even as I myself have made a freewill-offering for this house." Then many of the Jews went up to Jerusalem, and Cyrus gave into their hands the vessels of gold which Nebuchadrezzar the king had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and put into the house of his gods. They that went up were forty-three thousand and upwards, and they had of men-servants and maid-servants seven thousand and nine, and two hundred singing men and singing women. The high-priest was Jeshua, son of that Jozadak whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive, and the prince of the people was Zerubbabel, of the house of David. On the first day of the seventh month, which is Tisri, all the people came together as one man to Jerusalem, and the priests and the princes built an altar of sacrifice, and began the daily sacrifice, morning and evening. And on the fifteenth day of this month they kept the Feast of Tabernacles, according to the ordinance.

After this they began to prepare for the building of the temple, hiring masons and carpenters with money, and exchanging corn and wine and oil for cedar-trees of Lebanon, which the Tyrians and Sidonians brought by sea to Joppa. In the second month of the second year they laid the foundations of the temple. And



THE RETURN FROM BABYLON.

when they laid them, the priests stood in their robes with trumpets in their hands, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, praising God in the words of King David, as they were sung on the day when the ark was taken into the tent which David had made for it. And all the people shouted with a great shout when the priests and the Levites praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Nevertheless, certain of the old men, who had

seen the former house that the Chaldeans burnt with fire, wept aloud when they saw the foundations laid, because they were so small ; and no man could distinguish the shout of joy from the noise of weeping.

After this the people of Samaria came to them that were building the temple, and said, " Let us build with you ; for we worship your God even as ye do ; and we



LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE TEMPLE.

have done sacrifice unto Him ever since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who brought us hither." Now these Samaritans were strangers whom the kings of Assyria had brought from Babylon and other cities of their dominions, and had put in the country from which the children of the Ten Tribes had been carried away captive in the days of Hoshea, king of Israel. But Zerubbabel and Joshua and the other chief men

said to them, "Ye have nothing to do with us, that ye should join in building a house to our God ; we ourselves, and none besides us, will build a house to the Lord God of Israel, as Cyrus, king of Persia, hath commanded us." Then the Samaritans gave bribes to the counsellors of the king that they should hinder the work. This they did in the days of Cyrus and of Cambyses his son, but the work was not stopped. And when Cambyses was dead, and Gomates the magian reigned in his stead, giving out that he was Smerdis, son of Cyrus—but, in truth, Smerdis had been slain by his brother Cambyses—the governor of the province of Samaria wrote a letter to this purpose : "Be it known unto the king that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, to build again that bad and rebellious city, building the walls and laying the foundations. Be it known also unto the king that if this city be built and the walls set up again, this people will not pay toll, tribute, or custom, and so will his revenue suffer loss. Now it is not meet that we who have our livelihood from the king should see him so dishonoured, and therefore we send this to the king that search may be made in the records of the kings thy fathers concerning this people. Of a truth thou shalt find in the said record that this was ever a rebellious city and hurtful to the king, and that for this cause it was destroyed." Now to this letter the false Smerdis made this answer : "The letter which ye sent was read to me. And I commanded that search should be made, and it was found that this city of old time hath made insurrection, and that there have been great kings therein who have ruled over all countries westward of the river Euphrates, and that toll and tribute hath been paid to them. Command therefore that these men cease from their building." This letter the

false Smerdis wrote, and all the more willingly because, being a magian, he would not that any man should worship in temples, and the religion of the Jews was hateful to him. When the Samaritans received this letter they went up to Jerusalem, and made the people cease from their building by force.

But when the false Smerdis was dead, for Darius, the son of Hystaspes, slew him and reigned in his stead, Haggai and Zechariah, who were prophets of the Lord, stirred up the chief men of the Jews that they should begin again to build the walls and the temple. So they began, and when their enemies asked, "Who hath bidden you to build this house and this wall?" they would not cease till they should receive a commandment from King Darius. And when the governor of the province saw this he wrote to the king to this purpose: "Be it known unto the king that the house of the mighty God in the province of Judea is being built with great stones, and that the work goeth on fast. And when we asked the elders of the people, Who commanded you to do this? they said, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build again His house. Long ago a great king of the land built it; but when our fathers provoked the God of heaven, He gave us into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, who destroyed this house and carried away the people captive. Then in the first year of Cyrus a decree was made that we should build this house again; and Cyrus gave us also the vessels of gold and silver which Nebuchadrezzar had taken out of the former house. So the Jews answered us, Let the king therefore cause search to be made, that he may know whether King Cyrus made such a decree."

So Darius caused that they should make a search for this decree, and they found it in the house of the

rolls at Egbatana. Thereupon Darius sent to the governor of the province, saying, "We have found that it is as had been said by the Jews, that Cyrus gave commandment that this house should be built. Hinder it not therefore, but rather help, giving the people that whereof they are in need—money from the king's tribute, and bullocks and rams for sacrifice, and wheat and salt and oil and wine for the food of the priests, that they may worship the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons. Whosoever shall seek to alter this decree which I, Darius, have made, let timber be taken out of his house, and let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill." Thereupon the adversaries of the Jews gave help to them according to the king's commands, and on the third day of the month Adar, which is the twelfth month, in the sixth year of Darius the king, the temple was finished. And after this the people kept the feast of the Passover, according to the ordinance, on the fourteenth day of the first month. The whole time from the decree of King Cyrus, which he made in the year of the taking of Babylon, down to the decree of King Darius was two and twenty years.¹

A long time after these things,² in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who was the grandson of King Darius, it came into the heart of a certain Ezra to go up to his brethren at Jerusalem. This Ezra was of the house of Aaron, and he was also learned in the law; and he had found favour in the eyes of King Artaxerxes, who gave him commission to inquire how the people fared at Jerusalem and in the land of the Jews. Also the king sent by the hand of Ezra and his

¹ Cyrus took Babylon in 538 B.C., and the sixth year of Darius was 516.

² Fifty-seven years; the seventh year of Artaxerxes was 458.

companions freewill-offerings of silver and gold, six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and a hundred talents of gold, and silver vessels of which the value was a hundred talents,¹ and twenty basons of gold equal to fifty darics apiece, and two vessels of fine brass as precious as gold. Also the king commanded that the treasurers that were beyond the river Euphrates should furnish to Ezra a hundred talents of silver, and of wheat one thousand bushels, and of oil and of wine one hundred gallons of each, and of salt as much as he would. Further, all that were priests or Levites, or porters or singers, or did any work whatsoever in the house of God were to be free of tax and tribute. Ezra also was to judge his people according to the law of his God, and any one that would not obey the law of God and of the king should suffer death or confiscation of goods or imprisonment. On the first day of the first month Ezra went out from Babylon, and in nine days he came to a river that is called Ahava.² There he abode three days, till the Levites should come, for there were none with him. Also because there were enemies lying in wait by the way, he proclaimed a fast there by the river, that they might pray for a safe journey, for he was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect them against their enemies, seeing that they had told the king that the hand of their God was upon all that sought Him for good, and against all them that forsook Him. After this, on the twelfth day of the first month, they departed from Ahava, and travelling by Carchemish³ and the river Orontes, came safe to Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month.

¹ A talent may be taken as equal to £225 ; a daric to £1 : 5s.

² Now Hit, about eighty miles north-west of Babylon.

³ Bir, on the Upper Euphrates.

But when Ezra was come to Jerusalem he was told that many of the people had taken wives for themselves and for their sons of the people of the land, of the Canaanites, and of the children of Ammon, and of Moab, and of the Egyptians. And when he heard it he rent his garment and his mantle, and plucked out the hair of his head and his beard, and sat down in sore distress. Thus he remained till the time of the evening sacrifice, and all the people saw him. And at the time of the evening sacrifice he rose up, and when he had again rent his garment and his mantle, he fell upon his knees and prayed, saying, "O my God, I am ashamed to lift up my face to Thee, for our iniquities have gone over our head and our trespass hath provoked Thee. Our fathers sinned against Thee, and Thou didst deliver them into the hand of the kings of the nations round about. And now Thou hast showed us mercy for a little space, and suffered a remnant to escape, giving us favour, though we were but bondmen in the eyes of the kings of Persia, that we build again the house of God and the walls of Jerusalem. And now we have sinned yet again in Thy sight, taking to ourselves wives of the people of the land, concerning whom Thou didst command us, saying, Give not your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters to your sons, and seek not peace with them nor to be enriched with their wealth! Now, O Lord, we cannot stand before Thee because of this our sin."

And when Ezra had ended his confession and his prayer he prostrated him upon the ground, weeping, and a great multitude of men and women had assembled before the temple, and they wept a great weeping. Then one of the princes who had taken strange wives stood up, and said, "We have trespassed against our God in this matter; but yet there is hope, for the

people repent them of their sin. We will make a covenant to put away these strange wives. The matter is in thy hands. We will obey thy counsel." Then Ezra and the princes made a proclamation that all the people should come to Jerusalem within three days, and that if any man failed so to come, his goods should be confiscated. So the people came, and Ezra said to them, "Ye have transgressed against the law of the Lord by taking to yourselves wives of the heathen. Now therefore separate yourselves from them." And the people answered, "It is so ; and as thou hast said, so must we do. But the people that have transgressed are many, and this a time of much rain,¹ and we cannot remain out of doors ; neither is this a work of one day or two. Let there be appointed, therefore, a council of rulers and judges at Jerusalem, who shall inquire into the matter, and bring it to an end." And this was done, for the council sat from the first day of the tenth month till the first of the year following, and so made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives. The number of those that had transgressed was one hundred and eleven, of whom seventeen were priests and ten were Levites.

But though Ezra and the princes were zealous, nevertheless the work languished till God raised up a new helper, Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah. This Nehemiah was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes ; and in the twentieth year of the king, Hanani, who was his brother, came up from Jerusalem to Shushan, and Nehemiah asked him concerning the Jews that had returned and concerning Jerusalem. Hanani answered,

.. "They of the captivity that went up to Jerusalem are in great affliction and reproach ; and the wall is broken down, even as Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, broke

¹ It was December, or ninth month.

it down, and the gates are burned with fire." Then Nehemiah fasted, and mourned certain days, confessing his sins and the sins of his people, and praying to the Lord that He would cause him to find mercy in the sight of the king, for he was resolved that he would speak to him and make a petition for his people and his city. In the month Chisleu, which was the ninth month, he heard the evil news concerning Jerusalem, and in the month Nisan, that is the first month, his turn came to serve the king. And when he took the wine to give it to the king, the king saw that he was sad, and he had not been before sad in his presence. Then the king said, "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart." Nehemiah was sore afraid, for it was held that a Persian could not but be glad when he was with the king, and that to be sad in his presence was a crime. And he said to the king, "Let the king live for ever! Why should not my countenance be sad when the city, the place where my fathers are buried, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" Then the king said, "For what dost thou make request?" And Nehemiah answered, "If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, send me to Judah, to the city where my fathers are buried, that I may build it." Then the king said—the queen sitting by him—"For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return?" And Nehemiah set him a time. Also he said, "If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river Euphrates, that they may convey me till I come to the land of Judah; and a letter also to Asaph, the keeper of the king's park, that he may give me timber for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the walls of the city, and for my own house." All this the

king granted to him, God inclining his heart to favour His people.

Nehemiah set out from Shushan, having an escort of horsemen with him, and, crossing the Euphrates, showed the king's letter to the governors of the province. But Sanballat of Beth-horon, who was the chief man among the Samaritans, and Tobiah his counsellor, who was an Ammonite and a slave, were grieved exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. So Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, but he told no man why he had come. After three days he went out by night, riding alone upon a mule to see the city. He went out by the gate that opens into the valley of Hinnom, and turning eastward came to the gate by which the refuse was carried forth from the city; and he saw as he went that the walls were broken down and the gates burnt with fire. Thence he went on to the gate that is by the pool of Siloam, that is called the "King's Pool"; but here the beast that he rode could not pass. Therefore he went along the channel of the brook Kidron, and so returned to the gate of the valley of Hinnom. But the rulers knew not whither he went, nor what he did, for he had not told his errand to any man. But the next day he said to them, "Ye see the distress that we are in, and how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates are burned with fire. Come, let us build up the walls, that we be no more a reproach." Then he told them how he had found favour with God and with the king. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." And they took courage for the work. But Sanballat and Tobiah, and with them Geshem the Arab—for there were Arabs also in Samaria—laughed the Jews to scorn, and said, "What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?" To them the Jews answered, "The God of

heaven will prosper us. Therefore we who are His servants will arise and build. But ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." Then Nehemiah, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people built the wall of the city, both the outer wall and the inner—that is to say, the wall of the city of David.

But when Sanballat heard of it he was very wroth ; and he said to his companions, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Shall we suffer them to build in this fashion?" And Tobiah the Ammonite mocked, saying, "As for this wall of theirs, if a fox go up on it, he shall break it down."

Nevertheless the Jews persevered with their building till the wall had reached to the half of its proper height. But Sanballat gathered together a company of his own people, and of the Ammonites, and Arabs, and Philistines, and prepared to come up to Jerusalem and hinder the work ; and there was great discouragement and fear, for some of the people of the city grew weary, and the Jews that were in the country near to the Samaritans would have taken away those whom they had sent to help in the work ; and all the while the enemy threatened that they would come up, and slay the builders, and cause the work to cease.

Then Nehemiah set guards, with spears and swords and bows, on such parts of the wall as were low and weak ; and he set others where the ground gave them advantage for defence ; and to the nobles and rulers and all the people he said, "Be not ye afraid of them : remember the Lord, for He is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives and your houses."

From that time forth half the people worked at the building of the wall, and the other half had spears and shields and bows and coats of mail, the rulers

standing behind them, encouraging them in the work, or ready, if there was need, to lead them against the enemy. Many, indeed, whether they carried the stones or laid them in their places, with one hand wrought the work, and with the other carried his weapon. And the trumpeter stood ever by Nehemiah's side, ready to sound upon his trumpet ; for Nehemiah had said to the nobles



THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM.

and the rulers, and the rest of the people, "The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us ; our God shall fight for us."

So the people laboured in the work from the rising of the sun till the stars appeared. And Nehemiah said, "Let none return to his own village or city at night ; but

let every man lodge within Jerusalem that they may be a guard at night." And neither Nehemiah, nor his brethren, nor his servants, nor his bodyguard put off their clothes save only when they would wash themselves.

After this there was a murmuring of many of the people against their brethren ; for some said, "We have pledged our children that we may get food," and others, "We have mortgaged our lands, our vineyards, and our houses for bread because of the famine," and others again, "We have borrowed money upon our lands and vineyards to pay the king's tribute." And Nehemiah was very angry when he heard these complainings, and he said to the nobles, "Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. As for me, I have to the best of my ability redeemed my brethren who had been sold to the heathen ; and shall we, who are saved, cause them to be sold ? Now therefore, I pray you, give back to them their lands and their vineyards and their olive-yards, and the money that ye have taken from them." The nobles answered Nehemiah, "We will take nothing from them ; we will do as thou sayest." And Nehemiah made them swear, calling the priests that they might be witnesses to the oath. And he shook out the pocket of his robe, saying, "So God shake out every man from his house and from his labour that performeth not this promise ; even thus be he shaken out and emptied." And all the congregation said, "Amen." And the rich men did as they had promised. For twelve years was Nehemiah governor of the land, and all that time he received nothing ; but the governors that were before him had received forty shekels of silver day by day. Neither did he take advantage because the people were poor to buy land. But every day he fed at his table one hundred and fifty of the principal men, besides giving entertainment to such as came from the countries

round about. Every day were prepared an ox and six choice sheep and fowls ; and once in every ten days his cellar was stored with wine.

When Sanballat and his allies heard that the walls were finished, and that there was no breach left in them—only the doors were not put into the gates—they sent to Nehemiah, saying, “Come, let us meet in one of the villages of the plain of Ono.” This Ono is in Benjamin ; but they thought to do him a mischief. But Nehemiah sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down ; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you ?” Four times they sent to him, and four times he answered in the same way. Then Sanballat sent his servant a fifth time with an open letter wherein was written, “It is reported among the heathen that thou and the Jews think to rebel, and that thou buildest the wall that thou mayest be their king, and that thou hast appointed prophets to declare, There is a king in Judah. Now all this shall be reported to the king at Shushan. Come, therefore, let us take counsel together.” But Nehemiah said, “There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.”

After this Shemaiah said to Nehemiah, “Come into the house of God, and let us shut the doors of the temple, for thine enemies will come to slay thee. Yea, in the night will they come.” Now it was not lawful for any man to come into the temple, save for the priests and the Levites only. So Nehemiah answered, “Should such a man as I am flee ? can I go into the temple and live ?” So he perceived that Shemaiah had not spoken this of the Lord, but that the enemies had hired him to terrify him, and cause him to sin, that they might bring an accusation against him. And there were others, calling themselves prophets, and one

Noadiah, a prophetess, that spoke in this matter seeking to terrify Nehemiah. But the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month—that is, in fifty-six days from the beginning of the work. The compass of the wall was four miles or thereabouts, and all the people worked at it, being divided into twenty-seven companies. Then Nehemiah made Hanani his brother governor over the city, and he commanded that the gates should not be opened till the sun was hot. The city was large ; but the people were few, and the houses were not built.

At this time Ezra the scribe came back to Jerusalem—for he had been absent while the wall was being built—and the people pressed him that he would read the book of the law. So Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood with the priests about him, and he opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above them all ; and when he opened it all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God ; and all the people answered, " Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands ; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Then the Levites explained the words of the law to the people ; but these lamented when they understood them, for they saw how greatly they had transgressed. But Nehemiah, and Ezra, and the priests, and the Levites said unto them, " This day is holy to the Lord your God ; mourn not, nor weep, but go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared. Be not ye sorry, for the Lord your God is your strength." Then the people did as they were bid. And on the second day the chief of the fathers came to Ezra the scribe ; and it was found that the Lord had commanded Moses that on the fifteenth day of the seventh month the people should dwell in booths,

which they should make of branches of olive and wild olive, and myrtle and palm, and other trees of which the leaves are thick. And this the people did, making booths, each man for himself, on the roof of his house, or in the courtyard, or in the courts of the temple, or in the courts that are over against the water-gate and the gate of Ephraim. Such a Feast of Tabernacles



EZRA BLESSETH THE PEOPLE.

there had not been in Israel since the days of Joshua, the son of Nun. For seven days they kept it, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly as the Lord ordained. And on the twenty-fourth day of this same month was there a great fast held, and the children of Israel assembled clothed in sackcloth, with dust upon their heads. One-fourth part of the day they read the law, and for one-fourth part they confessed their sins,

and worshipped the Lord. And they made a covenant that they would serve Him and obey His commandments, wherein they vowed that they would not take wives from the people of the land, nor buy or sell on the Sabbath day ; and that they would pay each the third part of a shekel year by year for the service of the temple ; and would bring the first-fruits of their lands, and redeem also the first-born of their children, and the first-born of their cattle, and bring the tithes duly to the Levites. And to this all the princes set their seal.

THE STORY OF QUEEN ESTHER

WHEN Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, carried away from Jerusalem Jehoiachim, king of Judah, and the principal men of the people of the Jews, there was among the captives a certain Kish of the tribe of Benjamin. This Kish had a son that was named Shimei. In Shimei's time Cyrus, king of Persia, came up against Babylon and took it, and carried away to the land of Persia many of the Jews, of whom Shimei was one. To Shimei was born a son Jair, and to Jair again a son Mordecai, who, growing to man's estate, was made a doorkeeper in the king's palace in Shushan, which the Greeks called Susa. With this Mordecai there lived a maiden, the daughter of his father's brother, who had been left an orphan in her childhood. The maiden's name, in the language of her own people, was Hadassah, which word means Myrtle ; but in the Persian tongue it was Esther, which is by interpretation a Star.

In those days Ahasuerus, whom the Greeks called Xerxes, was king of Persia, a very great and powerful prince, who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. He ruled all Asia westward as far as the Great Sea (which is the Mediterranean) and eastward as far as the land of India ; Egypt also was subject to him, and Cyrene and Barca, cities of the Greeks which lay westward of Egypt towards the Great Desert ; and the Ethiopians, who dwelt to the south of Egypt paid

tribute to him. Having so much, he desired to have yet more, and to conquer the land of Greece. To this end he called together to his palace in Shushan the governors of all his provinces, that he might consult with them, and that each might know what preparation he should make in men or horses or ships. These councils were held for the space of an hundred and eighty days, for some of the governors came from very far away. And when they were ended the king made a great feast to all the people in Shushan. In the garden of the palace he made it ; and the guests sat under awnings of white and green and blue, which were stretched from pillars of marble on cords of fine white linen and purple running through rings of silver. The couches on which they lay at meat were of silver and gold, and the pavement of the banqueting-hall was stone of many colours, green and pearl-coloured and white and black. They drank out of cups of gold, and all the cups were of different patterns ; every man drank according to his own pleasure, none compelling him to drink less or more, for the king had commanded that it should be so. And Vashti the queen, at the same time, made a great feast for the women of Shushan in the chambers of the women in the king's palace.

Thus they feasted for seven days ; and on the seventh day the king, having drunk deep, commanded his chamberlains to bring Vashti the queen, with her crown upon her head, before the princes and the people to show them her beauty, for she was very fair to look upon. But the Queen Vashti, when the chamberlains brought her the king's commandment, refused to come. Thereat Ahasuerus was very wroth ; and he called his counsellors, the seven princes of Media and Persia, who were the first in his kingdom, and who could come freely into his presence, and said unto them (for they were

wise men, and knew the laws and customs of the land), "What shall we do to Queen Vashti, according to the law, for that she has refused to obey the commandment which the king sent her by his chamberlains?" Then Memucan, who was one of the seven princes, answered before the king and the princes, "Vashti the queen has done wrong not to the king only, but to all the princes and to all the people that are in the provinces of the king. For her deed will become known to all the women of the land, and when they shall hear how King Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought before him, and she refused to come, they will despise their husbands, and will speak to the princes of Persia and Media as Vashti has spoken to the king. Therefore, if it please the king, let there go forth a royal commandment that Vashti be no longer queen, and let this be written among the laws of the Medes and Persians, so that it be not changed; and further let her royal estate be given to another that shall be better than she."

This counsel pleased the king and his princes, and he sent a decree into every province of his dominion, written in the language of its inhabitants, that every man should be the master in his own house.

After this a search was made throughout the kingdom for the maiden that should be worthiest, for beauty and favour, to be put into the place of Queen Vashti, and in the end Esther, that was the cousin of Mordecai the Jew, was chosen, and the royal crown was set upon her head. And Ahasuerus loved her greatly, and made a feast in her honour to all his princes and servants, and gave remission of taxes to the provinces, and sent gifts to their governors. About this time two of the chamberlains of Ahasuerus took offence, and combined against him, and would have slain him, for they kept the

door, and had access to the king's person. But the thing came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and Mordecai told it to Esther the queen, and Esther told it to the king. Thereupon inquiry was made, and the plot was discovered, and the conspirators put to death. All this was written in the chronicles of Persia, how these men had conspired against the king, and how the matter had been discovered by Mordecai.

After these things the king promoted a certain Haman to be his chief minister, and set him above all the princes, and commanded that all the king's servants should do him reverence as he came in and out, prostrating themselves on the ground before him. And they all did so save Mordecai only, but he refused. And when his fellows asked him, "Why do you not pay reverence to the Lord Haman according to the king's commandment?" he answered, "Because I am a Jew, and it is not the custom of the Jews to do such honour to men." When they heard this, they told it to Haman, desiring to see whether he would hold Mordecai to be excused. But Haman was full of wrath, and was minded not to slay Mordecai only—for that seemed too small a thing for him to do—but all the people of Mordecai throughout the whole dominions of the king, for he knew that he was a Jew. When he had determined upon this he set himself to find out a lucky day for the doing of it. So his servants threw dice before him every day from the beginning of the first month to the end of the twelfth, and the day on which the throws were highest throughout the year was judged to be the most lucky. On this day, therefore, Haman said to the king, "There is a people dispersed throughout the king's dominions in all the provinces. They have laws that are different from the laws of all other nations, and they do not obey the commandments of the king.

Therefore it is not to the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let a decree go forth that this people be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of the collectors of the king's revenues that they may pay it into the treasuries of the king.¹ The king thereupon gave his ring to Haman, saying, "The people are given to you to do as you will with them, and their goods also." Then the royal scribes were brought in, who wrote letters to the governors of all the provinces with the king's command that on a certain day they should cause all the Jews—men, women, and children—to be slain. These letters were written on the thirteenth day of the first month, and the same day they were given to swift runners, who, having carried them a day's journey, handed them to other runners, and these again to others, till they reached the appointed place. And because to some of the provinces there was a journey of many weeks, the day appointed for the slaughter was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, being nearly the space of a year.

This matter of the letters being finished, the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the whole city of Shushan was troubled when it was known what the king had decreed. Then Mordecai the Jew rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his skin, and sprinkled ashes on his head, and sat down before the gate of the king's palace, and cried as he sat with a very loud and bitter cry. But beyond the gate he could not go, for no man that had any sign of mourning upon him might enter the palace, lest he should give offence to the eyes of the king. Thereupon the maidens that waited upon Queen Esther and her chamberlains told her, "Thy

¹ Ten thousand talents would amount to between two and three million pounds of our money; and as Herodotus estimates the regular revenues of the Persian king at 14,560 talents of silver, would amount to a little more than two-thirds of the sum coming annually into the treasury.

kinsman Mordecai sits before the gate of the palace lamenting, with sackcloth and ashes on him."

Then the queen was exceedingly grieved, and she sent raiment wherewith to clothe Mordecai, and bade her people take away his sackcloth from him. But he would not receive the raiment or put off his sackcloth. Then she sent her principal chamberlain, one Hatach, whom the king himself had appointed to wait upon her, and bade him inquire of Mordecai what was the matter that troubled him. So Hatach went forth into the open space that was before the king's palace and said to Mordecai, "What troubles you?" Then Mordecai said, "The king has commanded that all the Jews throughout his dominions should be slain, and Haman has promised that if this be done, he will pay into the king's treasury ten thousand talents of silver." And he gave him a copy of the decree to show to the queen, and said, "Bid her go unto the king, and make supplication to him, and pray him that he will spare her people." And Hatach came and told Esther the word of Mordecai. Then Esther sent Hatach again to him with this message: "All the king's servants, yea, and all his people even unto the border of his dominions, know that there is a law that any man or woman that shall come unto the king into the inner court, being not called so to come, shall die, except the king shall hold out to him the golden sceptre. But I have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days past." Hatach told these words to Mordecai. Then Mordecai sent again to Esther, saying, "Think not that thou being in the king's palace wilt escape more than the rest of thy people. If thou wilt say nothing, then deliverance shall come to the Jews from some other place, but thou and thy father's house shall perish. Dost thou not rather think that thou hast been called to the place of a queen

in Persia that thou mayest work deliverance for thy people in this time of their peril?" Then the queen sent to Mordecai this answer: "Go, gather together all the Jews that are in Shushan, and fast for me, neither eating nor drinking for three days; I also and my maidens will fast, and so I will go in unto the king. If I perish, I perish." And Mordecai did as Esther had commanded him.

On the third day of her fasting Queen Esther put on her royal apparel and went into the inner court of the king's house; and the king sat in his chamber, that was over against the gate of the inner court, and when he saw the queen standing in the court, she found favour in his sight, and he held out to her the golden sceptre. Then she drew near and touched the top of the sceptre. The king said to her, "What ails thee, Queen Esther? and what is thy request? For it shall be given thee, even unto the half of my kingdom." And Esther answered, "If it seem good to the king, let the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared;" for she feared to show at that time all that was in her heart. The king sent to Haman, and bade him make haste and come to the banquet that the queen had prepared. So the king and Haman came to the banquet. And as they sat at the wine, the king said to Esther, "What is thy petition? It shall be granted to thee even unto the half of my kingdom;" for he knew that she had something that she would ask of him. But Esther yet feared to show the thing. Therefore she said, "If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, then let the king and Haman come again to-morrow to the banquet that I shall prepare, and to-morrow I will make known my request."

Haman went forth from the queen's presence that

day with a joyful heart ; but as he passed by the gate of the king's palace he saw Mordecai ; and Mordecai, as before, refused to prostrate himself on the ground before him ; nay, he did not stand up nor move from his place. And Haman was full of indignation ; nevertheless he restrained himself, and went to his house. And when he came thither he called for Zeresh his wife, and for his friends, and boasted to them of his greatness, of his riches, and of the number of his children—for he had ten sons, and the Persians greatly honour those that have many sons—and how the king had honoured him, promoting him above all his princes and servants. “Yea,” he said, “this day Esther the queen did let no man save myself come in with the king to the banquet which she had prepared ; and to-morrow also I am invited with the king. But all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.”

Then Zeresh and his friends said to him, “Cause that a cross threescore and fifteen feet high be set up, and to-morrow speak unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon, and then go thou merrily with the king into the banquet.” And the thing pleased Haman, and he caused the cross to be made.

That night the king could not sleep ; so he sent for the book of the records of the kingdom, and bade his servants read to him out of it, for it was not the custom among the Persians that the king should read. And it was found written therein that two of the king's chamberlains that kept the door of his chamber had conspired to slay the king, and that Mordecai had told the matter to the king. Then the king said, “What honour and dignity has been done to Mordecai for this ?” Then the king's servants answered, “There has been nothing done to him.” Then the king said, “Who

is in the court?" Now Haman had come into the court of the king's house to make request to the king that Mordecai might be hanged on the cross that he had made. So the king's servants said, "Haman standeth in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in." So Haman came in. And the king said, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" And Haman thought in his heart, "To whom will the king delight to do honour more than to myself!" and he answered, "Let apparel which the king is wont to wear be brought for him, and the horse on which the king rides, and the royal crown that is set upon his head; and let these things be delivered to one of the most noble of the king's princes, that he may array the man with them, and cause him to ride on horseback through the streets of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour." Then the king said, "Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sits at the king's gate." And Haman took the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and made him ride through the great square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." And Mordecai went back to his place at the king's gate, but Haman returned to his house mourning, and with his head covered; and he told Zeresh his wife and his friends all that had happened to him. And they said to him, "If Mordecai be of the race of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him." And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlain, and bade him make haste and come to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

So the king and Haman came in unto the banquet

that the queen had prepared. And the king said to Esther, for he knew that she had something in her mind, "What is thy petition? It shall be granted thee even unto the half of my kingdom."

Then Esther the queen answered and said, "If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life and the life of my people be granted to me, for we are sold to be slain. If we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, then had I said nothing. But what shall the king profit if he gain ten thousand talents of silver and lose so many of his people?"

Then the king said, "Who is this that has dared to devise such a thing against thee?" for he knew not that the queen was of the race of the Jews.

And the queen answered, "My enemy is that wicked Haman." Then the king in his wrath rose from the banquet and went out into the garden of the palace. And Haman was sore afraid, and fell at the feet of the queen to make supplication for his life. And when the king saw it he said, "Will he dare to touch the queen?" And as the word went out of the king's mouth, the chamberlains covered Haman's face. And one of them said, "There is a cross threescore and fifteen feet high, which Haman caused to be made for Mordecai." And the king said, "Hang him thereon." So they hanged him upon it, and the king's wrath was pacified.

That day the king gave to Esther the queen all that Haman had possessed. And when Esther told him that Mordecai was her kinsman, the king gave him his ring, and set him in the office which Haman had had.

But the decree that had been sent out against the Jews yet stood. Therefore Esther went in again to the king, and when he held out to her the golden sceptre,

she said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and if I be pleasing in his eyes, then let the decree which Haman caused to be made against the Jews be reversed, for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my own people, or bear to see the destruction of my people?"

Then the king said, "Haman have I hanged because he laid his hand upon thy people, and his house have I given to thee, but the writing that is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring no man may reverse. Nevertheless ye may write what ye will on behalf of the Jews in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring."

So Mordecai wrote in the king's name to the governors of all the provinces throughout the realm of Persia to this effect, that it should be lawful for the Jews that were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, and to slay all such as should assault them, and to take their goods for a prey. And because the matter was urgent these second letters were sent out in haste by posts on horseback, and riders upon coursers of the king's stud and on young dromedaries. And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of purple and white, with a crown of gold upon his head. And the Jews greatly rejoiced both in Shushan and in all the provinces of the realm of Persia. And the fear of them fell upon the people, and many joined themselves to their religion.

On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month the enemies of the Jews assailed them, hoping to prevail against them. But the thing turned to the contrary, for the Jews gathered themselves together throughout all the provinces and defended themselves; and their enemies could not resist them, for the fear of them was

great, and also the governors helped them, having regard to Mordecai, who was now the chief man in all the kingdom. Therefore the Jews smote their enemies with the sword, and slew in Shushan five hundred men, and among them the ten sons of Haman. This was done on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and on the fourteenth day also the Jews slew their enemies, so that in Shushan there fell three hundred men, and in the rest of the provinces fifteen thousand. The men they slew, but they laid not their hand on the prey, but put it into the treasury of the king. And because the month was turned for them from sorrow into joy and from mourning into a good day, these days were appointed to the people of the Jews to be a feast for ever,—days of feasting and joy and of sending portions one to another, and of gifts to the poor. And they called the name of the feast *Purim*, that is to say the “Lots”; because Haman had the lots cast before him day by day that he might find an occasion to destroy the people of the Lord, but the thing turned to his own ruin, so that he was himself destroyed and his house.

THE STORY OF THE MACCABEES

IN the days of Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes,¹ king of Syria, there were many among the Jews who followed the customs of the Greeks, the leader being Joshua the high-priest, who called himself by the name of Jason. They wore the garments of the Greeks,² and made for themselves a place for wrestling and quoit-playing, and such sports, under Mount Zion itself, where the young men stripped themselves to contend in the games, and even the priests left the service of the temple to cast the quoit. Nay, the high priest Jason so despised his office that he sent an offering of money to the god Melkarth of Tyre.

In the fourth year of his reign³ Antiochus invaded the land of Egypt with a great host, and when the king of Egypt submitted himself, in the next year he came up to Jerusalem, and entered into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the great candlestick, and the table of the shewbread, and the flagons, and the cups, and the censers of gold, and he stripped off the gold that was on the walls. He slew also many of the people, and so departed. After five years, again, he sent his chief collector of tribute, Apollonius by name, to Jerusalem with a great army. This man

¹ Or "Glorious." The surname was turned into a nickname, "Epiphanes," *i.e.* the "madman."

² The *petasus* or broad-brimmed hat is especially mentioned. It was associated with the customary representations of Hermes (Mercury).

³ 171 B.C.

pretended to come peaceably, and so was permitted to enter without hindrance into the city. Being there, he waited till the Sabbath day came round ; and when the people were keeping the feast, he bade his soldiers fall upon them, and slew a great multitude of men. He built also a great wall round the city of David, and strengthened it with towers, and put in it a garrison of the heathen. Then was the sanctuary laid waste like a wilderness, the feasts turned into mourning, and the Sabbaths into reproach.

King Antiochus sent letters throughout his kingdom that all his subjects should become one people, every one having their own land. Especially to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah did he send messengers commanding that they should follow the religion of the heathen. He forbade the offering of sacrifice in the temple, and commanded that the Holy Place should be polluted, and that altars, and groves, and chapels of false gods should be set up, and that swine should be sacrificed. Also he commanded that none should circumcise their children ; and if any would not do after his commandment he was to be put to death.

On the fifteenth day of the month Chisleu¹ an altar of Olympian Jupiter was set up on the brazen altar that Zerubbabel had made ; and on the fifteenth day of the month they offered sacrifice on the altar. All books of the law that could be found they rent in pieces and burned with fire ; and if they knew of any man that had any holy book or that kept the law, they put him to death.

Now there dwelt in Modin² one Mattathias, a priest of the order of Joarib, which is the first of the orders. He had five sons, namely, John, that was called the

¹ About the end of the year 168 B.C.

² A town on the western border of the hill-country of Judea.

Fortunate, and Simon, called the Wise, and Judas, the Hammer,¹ and Eleazar, the Beast-Slayer, and Jonathan, the Dissembler. These men were greatly troubled at what King Antiochus had done. When the king's officers came to Modin to compel the inhabitants to sacrifice, they said to Mattathias, "Thou art a ruler and an honourable man in this city; come therefore first and fulfil the king's commandment. Then shalt thou and thy house be counted among the king's friends, and be honoured with many rewards."

But Mattathias answered, "Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away from the religion of their fathers, yet I and my sons will walk in the covenant of our God."

And when one of the Jews came forward to sacrifice at the altar, Mattathias was so inflamed with rage that he slew him there. Also the king's commissioner was slain, and the altar was pulled down.

Then Mattathias cried, "Whoso is zealous for the law, let him follow me;" and he and his sons left the city and fled to the mountains, and there abode, enduring great hardships.

While they were there it so happened that the soldiers of the heathen came on a certain Sabbath day upon a company of them that had broken the king's commandment. The soldiers said to them, "Come forth and do as the king hath commanded, and ye shall live." They answered, "We will not do so, neither will we profane the Sabbath." And when the heathen attacked them they would neither defend themselves nor flee. So they were slain, they and their wives and their children, to the number of a thousand people. When

¹ *Maccab*, probably, not certainly, however, meaning "Hammer." These surnames are, of course, afterthoughts. They were not borne by Mattathias's sons before they had distinguished themselves.

Mattathias and his people heard this they said, "We will not do as our brethren have done. If any come against us on the Sabbath day, we will fight against them."

Now Mattathias was old, and the time drew near that he should die; but before he died he called the people together, and said to them, "Simon is a man of



THE FLIGHT OF MATTATHIAS.

counsel; he therefore shall be your father; and Judas is mighty and strong; let him be your captain." So he died; and his sons buried him at Modin in the sepulchre of his father, and all Israel made lamentation over him.

After a while Apollonius, the chief collector of tribute, came against the Jews with an army. But Judas met him, and turned his army to flight. Many of the heathen

were slain, and Apollonius himself. And Judas took his sword, and ever after used it for his own.

Next Seron, who was captain of the king's army in Syria, came against him ; but Judas with a small company met him in the pass of Beth-horon.

Judas's men said to him, "How shall we that are so few fight against this great army, seeing also that we are faint with hunger?"

Judas answered, "It is no hard matter for many to be vanquished by few. Victory standeth not in the multitude of a host ; but help cometh of heaven."

When he had ended his speaking, he leapt suddenly on the enemy, and Seron and his host were overthrown. Eight hundred of them were slain in the Pass of Beth-horon ; and the rest fled into the land of the Philistines. After this the fear of Judas and his brethren fell upon all the nations round about.

When King Antiochus heard of these things, he was very wroth. But because his treasury was empty he himself purposed to go into the land of Persia, hoping to get great riches therefrom ; and he put one Lysias, who was his kinsman, to be deputy in his stead. Him he commanded utterly to root Israel from their land, and to plant strangers in it.

Lysias sent Ptolemy and Nicanor and Gorgias with an army of forty thousand footmen and seven thousand horsemen to make war against the Jews. These came and pitched at Emmaus.¹

Judas and his brethren and all the people that followed them came to Mizpeh, that is on the hill on the north side of Jerusalem, from whence they could see the temple where it lay desolate. They fasted that day, and put on sackcloth, and threw dust upon their heads, and rent their clothes. And they laid open before the

¹ In the Philistine plains.

Lord the book of the law wherein the heathen had painted the likeness of their false gods.¹ Also they showed the priest's garments, and the first-fruits and the tithes, as being ready to be offered, if only they might come to the Holy Place. And the Nazarites came as being willing to perform their vows if only they could come into the temple. Then they cried with a loud voice, saying, "What shall we do with these, and whither shall we carry them away, for thy sanctuary is profaned and trodden down?"

After this Judas made captains over thousands, and over hundreds, and over fifties, and over tens. But such as were building houses, or had betrothed wives, or were planting vineyards, or were fearful, these he commanded to return, every man to his house, according to the law. Then he pitched his camp upon the south side of Emmaus; and he said, "Arm yourselves and be ready to fight in the morning, for it is better for us to die than to see the calamities of our people and our sanctuary. Nevertheless, as is the will of God, so let Him do."

Gorgias took five thousand men, and went by night that he might fall suddenly upon the camp of the Jews. But Judas heard of it, and he removed from his camp, he and his valiant men, that he might fall upon the enemy in Emmaus, before that the others should have returned to it. In the meanwhile Gorgias came to the camp, and finding it empty, sought for the Jews in the mountains, saying, "These fellows flee from us." But as soon as it was day Judas showed himself in the plain with three thousand men, who were but ill-armed. And though he saw that the camp of the heathen was strong, and compassed about with horsemen expert in war, yet he encouraged his men to the battle. When the

¹ So Hezekiah laid Sennacherib's blasphemous letter before the Lord.

heathen saw Judas and his men they went out of their camp to fight with them. Then they that were with Judas sounded the trumpet, and fell upon the heathen and discomfited them, and pursued them, slaying such as they overtook.

After this Judas returned to the camp. But he said to his people, "Be not greedy of spoils, inasmuch as there is a battle before us; for Gorgias and his men are in the mountains. But when ye have discomfited these, then ye may boldly take the spoils."

But when Gorgias and his men saw that the camp was on fire, and that the host of Judas was drawn out on the plain ready to fight, they fled. So Judas and his men got great spoil, gold and silver, and purple and crimson apparel, and much of wealth of many kinds.

The next year Lysias came with sixty thousand footmen, choice soldiers, and five thousand horsemen, and pitched at Bethsura.¹ Now Judas had but ten thousand men, nevertheless he fell boldly on the enemy, and put them to flight.

When Lysias had fled, Judas and his brethren said, "Behold our enemies are discomfited; let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it afresh." So all the host went up to Mount Zion. And when they saw how the sanctuary was desolate, and the altar profaned, and shrubs were growing in the court as in a forest, they wept aloud. Judas appointed a force to fight against the fort and its garrison; and he chose certain priests that were of a blameless life to cleanse the sanctuary. These pulled down the altar of sacrifice, because it had been profaned, and laid away the stones till there should arise a prophet who should show what should be done with them. Then they took stones that were not touched with any tool, as the law commanded

¹ On the border of Idumæa (Edom).

and built an altar with them. They brought also new holy vessels, and an altar of incense, and a table for the shewbread, and ordered all things as they had been before. These things were finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Chisleu, in the third year after that the altar had been profaned.



THE PURIFYING OF THE TEMPLE.

These things being done, they kept the festival of the dedication with great gladness for eight days.

After this Judas set a garrison in Bethsura to be a defence against the Idumæans. He fought also against the Idumæans, and against the children of Ammon, and defeated them. But when he was returned to Jerusalem there came messengers from the land of Gilead with letters, telling how the heathen threatened

to destroy them. And while these were being read, there came other messengers from Galilee, saying, "They of Tyre and Sidon are assembled together to consume us."

Then said Judas to Simon, "Choose thee men, and go and deliver our brethren that are in Galilee, and I and Jonathan will go into the country of Gilead."

And he made Joseph and Azariah captains over the remnant of the host that was left in Jerusalem, saying, "Take charge of the people ; but see that ye make not war against the heathen."

Simon went with three thousand men into Galilee, and discomfited the heathen, and took their spoil, and brought them that had been taken prisoners by them with great joy to Jerusalem.

As for Judas and Jonathan, they went over Jordan, and went three days' journey into the wilderness. There they met with the Nabathæans, who told them how it fared with their brethren in Gilead. Then Judas went up suddenly against Bosora, and took it, and burned it with fire. This done, he went to the fortress of Dathema, where many Jews were shut up. The next day there came against the fortress Timotheus with a great host, bringing scaling-ladders and other engines of war. Then said Judas to his host, "Fight this day for your brethren." So he sent them forth in three companies, and when Timotheus and his men knew that it was Maccabæus that came against him, they fled ; and many of them were slain.

Then Judas went against the other cities of Gilead, and took them ; and when Timotheus gathered another host, having hired the Arabians to help him, Judas defeated him again ; and when he fled to Carnaim, he pursued after him, and took the city, and burned the great temple of Ashtaroth with fire.

After these things Judas gathered together all the

Israelites that were in Gilead, from the least unto the greatest, with their wives and their children and their goods, a very great multitude, that he might bring them into the land of Judah. When they came to Ephron they would have passed through the city. And Judas sent to the inhabitants of Ephron in a peaceable manner, saying, "Let us pass through your land to go into our own country. None shall do you hurt. We will only pass through on foot." But the men of Ephron refused. Then Judas and his men assaulted the city all that day and all that night, till at length it was delivered into their hands. So he brought the people of Gilead safely to Jerusalem.

But while Judas and his brethren were absent, Joseph and Azariah, that had been left captains of the garrison, hearing of the mighty acts that had been done, said, "Let us also get a name and fight against the heathen." So they went out against the city of Jamnia. But Gorgias and his host came out of the city against them, and put them to flight; and there were slain that day two thousand men of Israel.

After these things Judas went and fought against the Idumæans, and took Hebron; and he fought against the Philistines, and took Azotus.

About this time Antiochus the king, having heard that there was in Persia a city greatly renowned for its wealth, and having in it a very rich temple where Alexander, son of Philip, had offered many things, he went against it. But the people had warning of his coming, and drove him away, so that he returned to Babylon. There he heard how his armies had been discomfited in the land of the Jews. Then he laid him down on his bed, and fell sick for grief, till he was on the point to die. So he called for his friends, and said, "I remember the evils that I did at Jerusalem, how I

took all the vessels of silver and gold, and destroyed all the people without a cause. Now I perceive that for this cause these troubles are come upon me."

Then he called for Philip, one of his friends, and gave him the crown and his robe and his signet, to keep them for Antiochus his son. So he died in the thirty-second year of his age.

Meanwhile Judas besieged the fort that was on Mount Zion, and was like to take it. When the counsellors of the young king heard thereof they gathered a great army, and coming by way of Idumæa, pitched over against Bethsura, and assaulted it many days. But the garrison fought valiantly, and coming forth from the fort burnt the engines of war with fire.

Judas came forth to help his brethren, leaving the siege of the fortress in Mount Zion; and he pitched his camp in Beth-Zacharias. Very early the next morning the army of the king marched against him. Many elephants had they, and these they divided among the armies, appointing for every elephant a thousand men armed with coats of mail and helmets of brass, and also five hundred chosen horsemen. Whithersoever the beast went these went with him. Upon the beasts there were strong towers of wood, covered over, and fastened to them with girths; and in each tower were two-and-thirty strong men, besides the Indian that drove him.

Then Judas and his host drew near, and fought against the king's army, and slew of them six hundred men.

When Eleazar, the brother of Judas, saw that one of the elephants was higher than all the rest, and was armed with royal harness, he supposed that the king was thereon, and ran courageously through the midst of the battle, slaying on the right hand and the left, and

making a way through the enemy. This done, he crept under the elephant and slew him ; whereupon the elephant fell down upon him, and he died. But the rest of the Jews, seeing how strong was the king's army, turned away.

The king took Bethsura, for the garrison surrendered it, having no victuals ; and he besieged Jerusalem. But when the siege had now lasted many days, and Judas and his men were in sore straits for want of food, suddenly, by the counsel of Lysias, the young king agreed to conditions of peace. Nevertheless, when they were come into the city, seeing how strong was the wall, he brake his oath, and caused that a portion of it should be thrown down.

After these things the young Antiochus was slain, and Demetrius reigned in his stead.

Demetrius sent Nicanor, a man that bore deadly hate against Israel, with commandment to destroy the people. So Nicanor came with great force. But first he sought to deceive Judas and his brethren, sending to them with friendly words, saying, " Let there be no battle between us. I will come with a few men, that I may see you in peace."

So he came to Judas, and they saluted one another peaceably. But Nicanor's men were ready to take away Judas by force, but could not, for the thing was discovered.

When Nicanor saw that his counsel was in vain he fought against Judas and his brethren in the land of Samaria. Being defeated, he came to Jerusalem, and when the elders of the people and the priests came out to salute him peaceably, and to show how they offered burnt sacrifice for the king, he mocked them and laughed at them and spat on them, and swore in his wrath, " Unless Judas and his men are delivered into my hand,

if ever I come again in peace, I will burn this house with fire."

Then the priests stood before the altar weeping, and saying, "O Lord, Thou didst choose this house to be called by Thy name, and to be a house of prayer for Thy people ; be avenged of this man and his host, and let them fall by the sword."

So Nicanor went out of Jerusalem and pitched in Beth-horon, where there met him another host from Syria. But Judas pitched at Adasa¹ with three thousand men.

On the thirteenth day of the month Adar² the hosts joined battle ; but Nicanor's host was discomfited, and he himself was first slain. When his host knew that he was dead they cast away their weapons and fled. And Judas's men pursued after them. And the people came out of all the cities of Judah and closed them in, turning them back upon their pursuers, so that there was not one of them left. Afterwards they took the spoils, and smote off Nicanor's head and his right hand which he stretched out so proudly, and brought them away, and hanged them up on one of the gates of the temple.

Moreover they ordained that this day should be kept as a festival year by year.

Now Judas had heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were mighty and valiant men, and that they would receive with friendship such as would make a league with them. Moreover he heard how that they stayed the Galatians from their plunderings, and had won the land of Spain with its mines of gold and of silver, and how they had discomfited Perseus, king of the Greeks ; and how, when Antiochus the Great came

¹ Adasa is between two and three miles from Beth-horon.

² About 5th March 161 B.C.

against them with elephants and chariots and a very great army, they discomfited him, and constrained him to make peace with them, and pay them tribute; and how, notwithstanding this greatness, none of them wore a crown or was clothed in purple. Moreover he heard how they had made for themselves a senate-house, wherein three hundred and twenty men sat in council daily, consulting alway for the people, to the end that they might be well ordered; and that they were obedient to rule, and there was no envy or ambition among them. Considering these things, Judas sent ambassadors to Rome to make a league of friendship and alliance with them, and to beg that the Romans should deliver them from the Greeks. So the ambassadors came and told their errand, and a treaty was made between the two to this purpose:—

“If there come war upon the Romans or any of their confederates the Jews shall help them, neither shall they give anything to their enemies—of weapons, or victuals, or money, or ships.

“In the same manner also, if war come upon the Jews, the Romans shall help them, and not give aught to their enemies.”

The Romans sent also to Demetrius, warning him that he should do no harm to the Jews.

But while these things were being done, Demetrius, having heard how Nicanor had been defeated and slain, sent Bacchides, his lieutenant, and Alcimus, the high-priest, with a great host against Judas.

Judas pitched his camp at Eleasa, having three thousand men with him, and no more, for many of the zealous men¹ had fallen away from him when they knew that he made a covenant with the Romans. And of the three thousand many fled when they saw how great

¹ The Chasidim or Puritan party who were opposed to all compromise.

was the multitude of the enemy, so that there remained with him no more than eight hundred men. Nevertheless unto them that remained he said, "Let us arise and go against our enemies; peradventure we may prevail over them." But they said, "We shall not be able. Let us rather save our lives, and we will return with our brethren, and fight against them another day, for we are but few."

But Judas said, "God forbid that I should do this thing, and flee from them. If our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not stain our honour."

So the two armies went out to battle. And when Judas perceived that Bacchides and the strength of his army were on the right wing, he took with him all the most valiant men of his company and discomfited them, and pursued them as far as Mount Azara. But when they of the left wing saw this they fell upon Judas and his men from behind. Thereupon there was a sore battle, insomuch that many were slain; Judas also was killed, and the remnant fled.

But Jonathan and Simon took Judas their brother and buried him in the sepulchre of his fathers in Modin. And all Israel made great lamentation over him, mourning many days, and saying, "HOW IS THE VALIANT MAN FALLEN THAT DELIVERED ISRAEL?"

THE END

